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THE SMART SET



JANUARY
1911

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A MAGA
ZINE OF CLEVERNESS

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LA PREVOSA

By HELEN TALBOT KUMMER

PROLOGUE

THE day had been gloomy and sul-
len. Low gray clouds hung over
vast white plains of snow and
desolate forests of pine, trailing their
black shadows across the pallid wastes
as swiftly and silently as a wolf pack
in the night.

It was nearing twilight. From the
little Polish village of Molv the sound of
a church bell clamored out suddenly
upon the silence, was tossed high into
shattering echoes by the bitter wind
that swept across the dim white plain
patched with black low lying forests,
and died weakly away, like a little futile
cry of mankind, taken up by the moan
of the storm and swept into nothingness.

On the borders of the village a group
of miserable shivering prisoners, per-
haps ten in all, were huddled together
under the lances of a Cossack guard.
There were six men and four women.
They had been taken that morning,
and now at nightfall their faces were
set toward Siberia.

At a little distance some of the towns-
folk watched them dumbly. They
dared not make any demonstration or
sympathize with these outcasts, who at
dawn had been among them, brothers,
wives, friends, and now in an hour or
two would be as irrevocably separated
from them as though they were dead
and buried in the grim snow plain that
would soon bar them from the world of
men.

Among these onlookers was an old
man. One dark sinewy hand, wrinkled
and clawlike, grasped a wooden staff,
and the staff shook with the trembling of
his arm. He was hawk-nosed, gray-

bearded, eagle-eyed, with long grizzled
hair that blew like gray smoke in the
biting wind. At his side stood a young
man of perhaps twenty-five years, his
hands clenched hard at his sides. Above
the quivering old man he towered in his
slim height like a figure of hatred and
despair, his face drawn into tense lines,
his shadowy eyes dark as the storm
clouds that swept overhead, yet miser-
able in their menace and impotent.

From among the prisoners a woman
looked back and tried to smile at him
bravely. She had once been beautiful.
Even yet the thick plaits of her brown
hair, the contour of her face, the soft-
ness of her eyes were beautiful. Chained
to her was a man of fifty, who stood by
her silent and watchful. He also looked
back, but his face was stern as iron.

At that moment the armed guard
urged the prisoners forward through
the snow. The woman turned away
her head, and the old man who watched
dropped his staff and buried his face in
his hands.

But the younger man, as the prison-
ers began to move, darted forward and
flung himself in the snow beside the
woman, clasping her knees, his face up-
lifted. She bent and kissed him upon
the forehead before the guards could
wrench them apart. Then, looking
back no more, she went steadily forward
into the frozen wastes that stretched
dim and vast and pitiless to the Siberian
borders.

I

ON a cold, dreary evening in the be-
ginning of November, when the few
yellowing leaves left shuddering upon

January, 1911—1

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the trees were coated with rime, and a dense white fog rolling up from the river enveloped everything in a veil tangible and clinging as a web, a young man walked into Paris through the *barrière* at Auteuil. He held his slim, virile figure erect, yet about his feet the mud of sodden roads clung like lead, and upon his uncovered head the cold penetrating rain, beating steadily, streaked his dark hair drearily upon his forehead.

As he walked slowly through the streets of Auteuil, toward the Avenue de Versailles and so onward toward Paris itself, however, some of the vigor and spring of his bearing left him and a note of disillusion crept into his eager glance. Was this gray city with its white buildings rising ghostlike through the mist, its streets slippery with black and greasy mud, its strip of sullen green river laden with blackened coal barges, the gay and radiant city of his dreams?

As he gazed about him, a numbness, a feeling of hideous impotency, crept upon him. Although he, and others like him, might beat with their feeble hands upon the iron doors behind which wealth and absolute power had entrenched themselves, they could not change the injustice of the world. He saw himself of the toilers, the humble, the unheeded, the unknown. Life gives to few who have known poverty or some rankling injustice their revenge upon society. Those who take it as anarchists are madmen. Those who achieve it through sudden riches or power are favored of the gods. Somewhere he knew, for all his disillusion, there were amid that blur of lights before him great hotels, brilliantly lighted theaters, stately houses, where the rich, the idle, the successful dined at flower-laden tables or entered their carriages carelessly for ball or Opera.

And for him life had meted this—to stand behind the prison bars of poverty and obscurity and watch the glow and glitter of life, its purple and its triumph, its riches and its power, pass him by unheeding.

The prison bars of poverty and obscurity! The hot rebellion of the social

revolutionist rose in him with the thought. All the Polish blood in him was afire with rebellion and resolve. He had come to Paris to plot and plan, and even to find the gateway to an autocrat's palace. Across his thoughts floated the vision of a vast white plain of snow, darkening to gray in a winter's twilight, and across it moved the figures of a man and a woman chained together. And the woman looked back and smiled.

It was near midnight, and under the frosty glitter of stars that the recent storm seemed to have burnished the theaters of Paris were disgorging their audiences into the wind-swept streets. Near the stage entrance of one of these, a famous variety theater where a new dancer had recently come into immense vogue, a little group of the merely curious was gathered to watch this new favorite step into the motor waiting at the curb. Among them a young man with a slim, virile figure, mud-splashed, pressed with fascinated eagerness, his eyes roving from the glistening dresses and diamond-crowned heads of the women entering their carriages from the theater's poster-flanked doorway to the dark side entrance obstinately closed.

At length when the crowd had thinned perceptibly and the little knot of gazers began to manifest some impatience, the stage door opened and a woman came out alone.

She was slender, and moved with a certain tigerish grace, evident even under the long cloak which covered her from head to foot, and whose furred hood showed only glimpses of a pale face and brilliant eyes. As she advanced quickly along the narrow strip of sidewalk, the crowd jostled forward with peering curiosity, and in the movement a burly fellow, a true *voyou* of the outer boulevards, thrust himself rudely before the travel-stained onlooker beside him; and when the latter resented the action, he turned and pushed him aside violently, almost with the effect of a blow.

Like a flash the other was upon him,

supple and catlike in his rage, the lawless Polish blood in him leaping up as a dagger flashed from beneath his coat and was poised for an instant jeweled and glittering in his upraised hand.

For a breath the dancer shrank back as though she would retreat into the doorway; the next—as her swift glance took in the magnificent jewels in the golden hilt of the dagger that sparkled in the slim brown hand that held it—she cleared the intervening space with a light bound and threw herself upon the descending arm.

For a confused instant Paul Vedorowna was conscious of eyes like hot yellow sunlight looking into his, of a warm breath on his cheek, of the blood beating in his own temples and the odor of strange exotic flowers like a cloud about him. The next moment he felt himself pushed toward the waiting motor, thrust unresisting within it and driven rapidly away.

For some minutes the woman studied him deliberately and in silence under the shadow of her hood—his shabby mud-splashed coat, the splendid dagger which he still held in his hand, the strange personality that looked out of his narrow eyes and under all adversities of garb and circumstance endowed his whole being with a strange and magnetic quality. At length she inquired with more than a hint of sarcasm:

"Do you think our polite Paris a bear pit? You would be in the hands of the police by now if you had been a little quicker with that dagger. Where can I set you down?"

Instantly her companion was aware that he did not wish to be set down.

"I have a letter," he said, hesitatingly, "to a Turkish rug merchant across the river. I was on my way there—but it is very late. I have never been in Paris before tonight."

He drew the letter in question from his pocket and bent forward to look at it by the lamplight which flashed, faded and flashed again as the car whirled near the curb. As he did so the dagger slipped from his hold and fell at his feet. With a swift movement the dancer bent and picked it up. She looked at it a

moment in silence, then penetratingly into the face of the man before her as she handed it back to him.

"A beautiful toy," she remarked. "It should have a history, for I see a prince's crown upon the hilt. You speak French well for one who has never been in Paris. Come—you are tired, and I think perhaps hungry. Forget your rug merchant for an hour, share my supper and tell me the story—of that dagger, for example." Her eyes dwelt upon the jewels.

At that moment they entered the Place de la Concorde, which lay like a great sea of light with the red stars of myriads of lamps of carriages and automobiles moving swiftly across it. They flashed upon the weapon as Vedorowna thrust it again beneath his coat.

"Come," said the dancer once more persuasively, "I live not far off, in the Avenue de Versailles, near La Galliote. You interest me—for a thousand reasons. Come."

"I will come," said Vedorowna. "You don't know what it is to be alone in a great city, and then suddenly—to find a friend." He fell silent, looking out across the river to where on its further shore the cleft city lay like a great glowworm in the night. He was silent for so long that at length the woman touched his arm. He turned and looked at her.

"I do not even know your name," he said. "Yet you have befriended me."

The dancer raised both her hands as he spoke and thrust back with a single swift gesture the dark fur hood from about her head.

"To the public," she said, "I am La Prevosa, the greatest dancer in Europe. To my friends—Elise Villiers."

As she spoke the automobile drew up sharply before an iron gateway, that gave entrance to a house in the Avenue de Versailles beyond the bridge at Passy.

II

LA PREVOSA, the divine, the exquisite, who could float across a stage as lightly and dreamily as a bit of thistle-

down, or dance as wildly, as recklessly and as hotly as a tongue of flame, had been bored and furiously dull until the flash of the Pole's jeweled dagger gave a promise of excitement.

She was a woman avid of new sensations, capricious and reckless. When earlier in the evening she had left the stage for her dressing room and found there the usual bouquets, the usual notes and the usual invitations to supper from the usual types of men, she had given all her roses to a neglected chorus girl—who was quite honest and danced for bread and butter—referred a dozen supper invitations to her maid, sent all her admirers to the right-about, and throwing a cloak about her dancer's costume, had left the theater for home—disgusted with the inevitable repetitions of life.

But now she felt that Fate—herself a woman to be bored by the unimaginativeness of men—was providing her with an adventure in which repetition would bear no part. For Paul Vedorowna, she divined, had imagination, and hence for women an infinite charm.

She stepped swiftly from the automobile, crossed the pavement, traversed the formal garden behind the iron gates, and entering her own house, gave an order to the servant who admitted her and drew her companion into the little *salon* on the ground floor.

Somehow, as he stood for a moment uncertainly near the door, the room reminded Vedorowna of sunlight. He did not know that the golden *salon* of the Avenue de Versailles was as famous as the dancer who had designed it.

The room was indeed a triumphant tone scale in gold, from ivory and the palest amber to the glowing yellow of a desert sun. Its walls, ivory-tinted above and below, were paneled midway with pale yellow silk in squares and oblongs stiff with Japanese embroidery in gold thread. The furniture of deep brown wood inlaid with ivory was piled with cushions of amber satin embroidered with clusters of purple pansies and wistaria. The rugs were famous Oriental weaves in tones of ivory and brown

and bloomy purples, and concealed lights, deftly shaded, made the yellow glow of noonday in the room. On the table was a flat golden dish filled with thick clusters of purple heliotrope whose delicate fragrance was like the presence of La Prevosa herself—warm and caressing and poignantly sweet.

She stood near the log fire that burned on the tiny hearth, the little secret smile that at once allured and defied the pursuit of men gathering upon her lips. To Vedorowna as he turned toward her, she was a vibrating palpitating mystery—the very embodiment of all his untutored dreams.

He came close to her and raised his hands to take her cloak. With a laugh, and that sudden swift, light movement, that in her was always instinct with grace or a fine sense of dramatic values, she eluded his proffered aid and dropped the cloak from about her shoulders to the floor?

Save for the peasant girls of a Polish village, wind-tanned and brown-armed, Paul Vedorowna had seen no women, spoken with none, touched none. And this woman was like a flame-colored flower blowing in a hot south wind. She stood before him in her dancer's costume of clinging yellow gauze threaded with gold, a thin poppy-tinted silk shawl with flame-colored fringes bound about her hips with a girdle of topazes. The glistening yellow gauze lay in a billow of cobweb lightness about her feet in the folds which she used to open and shake out around her like the petals of a great golden flower in her dance.

She spread out her hands with a little deprecating smile. "Forgive this masque," she said. "I expected no guests."

"And I," said Vedorowna with a faint smile, "am of the hedge and byway variety." He smoothed his shabby sleeve a little sadly with rueful fingers. "It is only in my dreams," he added, "that I see the purple and fine linen underneath these rags."

Struck by a certain poetic felicity of expression in him, which contrasted as oddly with his evident poverty as did

the jewels in his weapon, La Prevosa looked at him searchingly.

*At that moment a servant opened the door leading into the dining room. A round table in the center of the room was laid for two. A covered silver dish, tall glasses poised on their stems like yellow bubbles, the sparkle of amber wine, caught the light.

To Paul Vedorowna as he sat down the wet, slimy, hideous Paris of an hour ago was forgotten, had ceased to be. This indeed was the Paris of his dreams. As he looked at the woman beside him he knew that those dreams had taken tangible and radiant form in her, and the breath caught in his throat.

Elise Villiers, the altar of an ephemeral idolatry, was slender and sinuous as a willow, with hot golden eyes as clearly yellow as a topaz in the sun—the large pupils like black velvet. Her mouth was a flexible red line against the dead whiteness of her skin, her hair a shining brown shading into bister shadows. She was beautiful with the beauty of grace, of mood only, as antipodal to the grand type as a humming bird to the still dignity of marble—but to Paul Vedorowna, dreamer and student of books wherein women had no place, a creature of another world.

"May I see the dagger again—in my own hands?" she said coaxingly, as she refilled his glass.

He drew it from his coat, and laid it on the table. She caught it up, examined it, then with a sudden idea sprang to her feet holding it aloft with both arms outstretched above her head, her body tense, her face like a mask of revenge uplifted to the glittering thing. "Splendid!" she cried, leaving her pose, and coming back to the table.

"A new dance—Judith! I have it. I will have an Eastern costume richer than anything Paris has ever seen before. You will lend me the dagger, and I shall appear as Judith, the slayer of Holofernes. I shall call it 'The Dance of Death.'"

She stopped, for Vedorowna had leaned forward and taken the dagger from her fingers, while for a moment that inherent vigilant distrust of man-

kind which had under Russian government rooted deep in his character glinted in his eyes. But for a moment only. As he looked again at his luxurious surroundings, the suspicion that she wished only to cajole the jewels from him faded. Vanity whispered that her interest lay deeper and was centered in himself alone.

"The recognition of this dagger might be my death warrant," he said, and holding it under the light, he indicated the arms and crown engraved upon the hilt.

The dancer looked at it with wonder, then impulsively she put out her hand and laid it for an instant on his.

"Trust me," she said softly. "Tell me something of yourself—everything—if you will. I will not betray you."

She had reseated herself before the disordered table, her arms crossed upon it before her. A great rose, fallen from its bowl, made a crimson splash upon the white cloth; her damask napkin lay crumpled beside her, and at her elbow one of the tall yellow glasses lay—overset by her hasty movements. In her lifted eyes was the lure of that veiled, ungraspable, enigmatical thing which is the soul of a woman. "I will never betray you," she repeated.

To Paul Vedorowna the appeal of her beauty and friendship was suddenly all-compelling. He had drunk little, yet the unaccustomed taste of wine, the unaccustomed sweetness of a woman's presence, sang in his brain, made a mock of his caution. Almost without his own volition, he began to speak, slowly at first, and then as the facts he related gripped and excited him anew, with increasing intensity and passion. He possessed a singular facility of speech, a magnetic quality which drew the sympathy or interest of any hearer like a spell, for he could play upon the spoken word as a skilled musician upon an instrument. He told his own story, as in the dark of a winter's night in a Polish village he had heard it from the lips of an old man while the footsteps of a chain of prisoners with faces turned toward Siberia seemed still to echo across the snow.

His mother had been a Russian, left quite penniless by the death of her father in St. Petersburg. She had become a governess, and eventually had taught the children of an official well known at the Russian court. Being pretty, she attracted the notice of a Russian prince who was high in court confidence.

Some months before, however, she had met and fallen deeply in love with a young Pole, Michael Vedorowna, who had left Poland for her sake and was working feverishly in St. Petersburg to make her a home and marry her at once. But the titled Muscovite and his hour's preference for a lovely face were stronger than all their lover's vows—though, to do him justice, he knew nothing of Vedorowna's existence. He had the girl arrested for implication in a Nihilist plot of which she had never even heard, much less participated in; but instead of the fortress, the cell, the knout, even Siberia, which she had expected, she was taken to a summer palace belonging to the Prince on the borders of the Baltic. Within a few hours of her disappearance Michael Vedorowna had learned the truth and had followed. And in those hours he had become a Nihilist heart and soul. He moved warily, and at length managed to gain an entrance to the library where the man who had injured him was writing at a table. There was a dagger on the table, a jeweled toy thrust in the leaves of a book, but keen and deadly. He snatched it up and dealt a blow, and in mad haste, still holding it in his hand, he went onward through the house seeking the woman he loved. They escaped in the night and sought refuge in Poland in the little village of Molv, where for years they lived in peace and undetected under another name.

Eventually they learned that the man whom Vedorowna had stabbed had not died, but lived, a continual menace to their security.

And it was this man who at last discovered in Vedorowna—or Salski, as he styled himself—the leader of a Nihilist's plot, and subsequently located his hiding place in Molv. It was he who sent

Michael Vedorowna and his wife into the living death of the Siberian mines. Their son he never saw, nor did he know the name he bore; to him Vedorowna had existed only as Salski the Nihilist, who had tried to assassinate him and had later been the leader of a very conflagration of Nihilism. The name of Vedorowna meant nothing to him.

La Prevosa, leaning across the table with her hands clasped under her breast, stirred and sighed. "And who was the man?" she asked.

Vedorowna shook his head. "I do not know. They did not wish me to know, and when they were taken away by this man's agents, the agents of the Third Section, who are so terribly silent, so absolutely secret, my grandfather would never tell me. I could find out nothing. The dagger I was to take and dispose of for my needs. But that I will never do. I became restless there in Molv after they had gone, and longed to come here—to begin life, to throw my books aside and know what it means to be a man. And the slow, aimless months there in Molv seemed to mock my inability to learn the name of the man who owns this dagger." He grasped the hilt of the weapon suggestively as he spoke. "I wish to return it to him," he said.

Then he passed from these things to his own ambitions. And now the face of the woman who was his listener quickened with a new and more personal interest. Here, indeed, was a definite lure to her wild fancy, her passionate far reaching ambitions, already outstripping her own success. With the mental attributes of the born *intrigante*, she scented a plot which a master mind might bring to a momentous result.

"For Poland," she said musingly. "And you dream of being Poland's liberator—or if not that, to rise high in a new government. Perhaps—who knows?—I may help you to your dream; for I know a man who uses to great issues—such dreamers as you."

Suddenly she floated to her feet and looked at him with a dazzling quickening of all her features. "Fate has been

good to me tonight," she said. "And you have given me an interest in life—life that seemed so pointless and so dull. Will you come back to me tomorrow? I can help you; I can unlock to you doors to which alone you could never find the key."

As he stumbled to his feet, flushed, uncertain, his eyes alive with triumphant possibilities, she went into the next room, and returning, thrust a small leather case into his hand and closed his fingers upon it. Then, before the words of protest and gratitude that were on his lips could be uttered she pushed him to the door, and turning, left him.

III

UNDER the very eaves of her house in the Avenue de Versailles, La Prevosa had established a boudoir of her own that was as complete an expression of her inmost soul as the golden *salon* below stairs was the expression of her acquired sense of the exquisite and the proportionate. The golden *salon* was a graceful poem, a delicate subtle composition. The boudoir above was rude, barbaric, elemental, as was the soul of the woman under its veneer of Parisian half-tones. Elise Villiers was a Provençale, with the blood of southern France and of Spain running hot in her veins. At times tired and colorless as ashes, at others she was like a flame, magically endowed with the evanescent form of woman.

It was more than a week after her first encounter with Paul Vedorowna that she came into this room of hers, which sometimes at twilight seemed peopled with her darker moods like an abode of specters—and threw herself face downward upon a couch. It was a dull day, rainy and cold, with a stormy wind that poured with a deep soughing sound through the bare branches of the chestnuts and acacias in the garden outside. The woman felt a kinship with that wind. It could be as soft and caressing as a siren's kiss, but always its heart was dark, its voice passionate and wild. At times the noise of Paris

streets, the smell of the perfumes upon her body, the feel of her clinging silks sickened and smothered her, and she longed for the heart of a great wood in a storm or the battle of lashing waves upon a cliff.

She lay for a while where she had flung herself, then raising her head, she gazed sullenly out into the fading light. She was thinking of Vedorowna, and of her failure since that first night of fascinated surprise to bend him as she wished. Deep in him she recognized a watchful cynical something inherited from an ancient subtle half-Oriental race, a spirit which at times dominated him, with a sense to the observer of something at once cold and fiery. It was as though ambition, the desire to vie and reckon with the circumstances and the man that had oppressed him was stronger than any other influence. His origin, his personality, his possibilities, fascinated her, for Vedorowna was one of those strange virile beings to whom birth and environment are only accidents, and who, blooded with the purple strain of genius, rise above the mediocrities of life, in defiance of all adverse circumstance—it would sometimes almost seem of fate itself.

La Prevosa believed that he might become a powerful factor in a Polish revolution and rank high in a reformed government. As she gazed moodily out into the fading light, giving free rein to her imagination, her face quickened and glowed. She saw herself as sharing the power and the place of such a man.

A light step sounded on the stair, as though her thoughts had called their object to her, and Vedorowna crossed the room and took the hands she yielded him. As he sat down beside her she looked at him searchingly, impressed anew by a personality that was the antitype of all others she had ever known.

In the scant week since first he had entered Paris, his appearance had undergone a startling transformation. He wore riding dress. He was flushed with youth, with hope, with her own proximity. He looked much older than his

twenty-five years, and seemed to have gained in a night a nonchalance, almost a distinction.

He put his hand into a pocket and drew out a small leather case, the same that she had thrust into his hand a week before. Smiling, he opened it and displayed the bracelet it contained.

"I shall never forget that you gave it," he said. "You meant that I should sell it for my needs instead of the dagger, yet I knew that it was in a way a sort of test—that you would despise me if I did. You see, you have already given me a valuable weapon beside the dagger—the knowledge that woman is a paradox." He laughed lightly and laid the jewel in her hand. "I have found friends," he said, "among the workers for Polish liberty. I had letters—I am the son of Paul Vedorowna who endured Siberia for the Cause. They have made me one of them. I can sharpen the dagger point a while yet."

He looked at her with warm eyes and lips. "And you believed in me, and took me in when I was cold and tired and unknown to you—and gave me that bracelet. I shall never forget that."

His voice faltered, and he pressed his lips to her hands. Elise Villiers felt her heart stirred strangely.

Passion and love are strange adventurers. Gipsy wild and most lured by the call of the unknown, they go out with eager hands and lips of flame to some unnamed, untried personality, seen but an hour before, cloaked in the mystery of the yet unfathomed. With the sudden movement of something within her that was uncalculated and real, as young as spring and as old, she bent, and taking his face in her hands, kissed him upon the lips.

IV

THERE was silence in the dusky little room for a while—a throbbing silence. In the stillness they could hear the drip-drip of the raindrops from the bare branches of the trees outside and the low sooughing of the stormy wind.

Then with her light silken movement

the dancer threw herself into a great chair, and tossing her arms behind her head, looked up at the man standing close beside her.

"Tell me more about yourself," she said. "How did you pass your days in that little Polish village? What else than a patriot and a revolutionist did you dream of being? What was your heart set on? And tell me more of—your mother."

Vedorowna stirred and turned away abruptly. He went to the window and looked out into the gray and windy twilight. The caress of a moment before was still wild in his pulses—yet he was half grateful to her, now that an exquisite moment was past, for not seeking to prolong it. She had let it die away in the silence like the marvelous ultimate note of some star soaring melody. Now this lower pitch of suggested confidence and quietude soothed him.

And this mention of his mother!

When he turned, a long stormy breath lifted his chest and his eyes were on fire. He came and sat down, leaning forward in a half-crouching attitude, his unruly dark hair falling disordered over his forehead.

"I have dreamed of being a writer," he said. "I think I could aid my country and its cause far more with the pen than with the sword. But apart from that, I have always had the same craving that the artist has to see his ideas take form and color upon a canvas. I have written and torn up and written again. Yet in Molv I never wrote anything vital because there existence was stagnant. I was like a man with a row of wax figures, endeavoring to endow them with life, instead of going down into the heart of the human struggle and giving birth to real children."

He paused for a moment, brushing the hair absently away from his drawn brows.

"We must suffer for our brain children, too," he said. "Nothing emanating from humanity is created without physical or mental suffering—neither man nor his works."

Elise Villiers stirred, swept out of her

chair, paused a moment to touch his hair and shoulder with a caressing hand, then cast herself down upon a striped and tawny skin before the open fireplace, bathing herself luxuriously in the flickering redness and holding out her slender hands to its warmth.

"Life is where love is," she said dreamily. "No poet or writer or painter ever fashioned anything but wax figures until love came. There is nothing but that. It means all the rest—all the sorrow and all the happiness of the whole world."

With a sudden strange prescient shuddering, she stretched out both hands toward him. "I have always been afraid," she whispered.

He went to her and bent over her, taking both hands and drawing them to his lips, and even at that moment she marveled at the naturalness of the gesture in one who had never kissed a woman's hands before.

"What is it?" he said. "Why are you afraid?"

She looked up at him for a moment's breathless holding of his eyes. "I am afraid of a great love," she said at last. "It nearly always means tragedy for those in whose hearts it is born."

She was quiet a moment, as though dark wings passed over her. Life holds these moments of terrible pre-science. There are times when the first stirring and awakening of a great love is like the tearing of a veil—a sudden blinding flash of light, in which for a tragic instant it is given to us at the very beginning to see also to the end.

Something of this feeling was upon her now. She knew that she would love Paul Vedorowna as we love but once, yet she knew no less surely that such love, with rare exception, is nearly always but half understood, but half returned, doomed to a great solitary yearning, a great unappreciated sacrifice. It has its magic hours—but it is the little loves of the world that bring happiness.

Her hands clung to his for a moment, then slipped down into her lap. She watched him in silence for a space as he left her to move restlessly about the

room and return at last to her side. "Tell me more," she pleaded after a while.

"There is so little," Vedorowna answered. "I learned French from my mother—she was a governess, you remember, and spoke the language well. I wrote in French some stories of Russian life, and sent them anonymously to a French journal. They were published a year ago. I will bring them for you to read. I always meant to come here. I studied French continually—especially after—she—my mother—went away." For the drawing of a breath he was still caught in the grip of a torturing remembrance.

"God!" he burst out again. "Think of it! I can see her now going away across the snow to trial—and to Siberia."

The woman before the fire stirred, sprang erect and came close to him, yet without touching him. "And she is there—now?" she breathed.

He turned from her, flinging his hands for a moment above his head in impotent rebellion.

"There—my God, yes! She is there in that frozen hell, and she is alone. My father died—I heard that. Perhaps his enemies helped him to it. I don't know. But she—all gentleness and fragility, innocent as she is of any wrongdoing—she is there and alone. When I sit by a fire and am warm I think of her in the ice and the desolation, and I hate myself. When I eat good food and am satisfied I think of her, half starved and shuddering, and I become a madman. When I idle and enjoy myself I think of her in the mines or worse, and I quiver only just to kill—to kill. Nihilism seems justified—glorified—right."

He sank down trembling. Elise Villiers looked at him, and could find no words that were not inadequate.

"She was still beautiful when they took her away," he went on after a moment. "Now perhaps those who knew and loved her best would scarcely recognize her. In her youth they said she was exquisite. She must have been to attract the man who took her to that

summer palace on the Baltic. I have an old picture of her with long plaits of silky black-brown hair, and long, narrow eyes that dreamed as they looked at you, and a body slim with youth. And he—not content with what he had done already—must hound her further into the living death of Siberia."

He turned and looked into the warm and rosy heart of the fire, and his tone grew dreamy as that of one who in spirit is a great distance away gazing upon a far-off scene.

"It is so dreary there," he said, "so desolate. The white snow plains stretch away like the sea to a horizon that is themselves—boundless—illimitable—terrible. The forests are like black, inky splashes across the white immensity. The sky is nearly always gray, or a blue as hard as steel itself. In the black nights the wolves swing in their long silent gallop across the snow. And the summer parches and burns; its green is a poisonous green; it sears and chokes. But it is over soon, and then the land is white again and silent, terribly, savagely silent, save for the voices of the wolf pack in the night."

Outside the short November day was plunged into advancing gloom and storm. Near at hand, to be sure, Paris decked itself to dine and revel, and the hour drew near when the woman crouched so silently here by her waning fire, learning the big things of the heart, must deck herself, too, and dance and allure with her thin, brilliant lips and her warm, golden eyes. So many, many nights she had done it with enjoyment; it seemed strange that now suddenly it had grown garish and hateful like an artificial poppy, her own ambitions like a handful of withered petals blown from her grasp on a stormy wind.

Vedorowna roused himself presently from his somber brooding and looked at her.

"I am working, first to free my mother, then for Poland and my own ambitions," he said almost humbly. "You are very good to listen to me like this. I am a stranger—I must fight my way. Why should you care?"

Elise Villiers locked her hands about

her knees and looked up at him with a wonderful quickening of all her vivid face.

"It is the great mystery of life—that I care," she said simply. "A day—an hour—what does it matter, since just a handclasp and a glance are sometimes enough to make one care—so much that life is never the same any more—so much that one is willing to give some big, precious thing, even that life itself, to prove it. Before it all one's former being and interests and friendships and little loves wither like field daisies in a sudden great white flame. It is the mystery of life."

She made a wonderful picture in the firelight. The dusky purple of her gossamer dress melted into the shadows and was encrimsoned by the glow from the red embers. Her eyes shone wide and clearly yellow; her mouth was like a scarlet thread against the glimmering whiteness of her face.

Paul Vedorowna went to her and slipped to one knee beside her. "Life is giving me more than I deserve," he said. "I am not worthy of so much."

She held his hand closely for a moment in both her own. "I should dance with a light heart tonight," she said softly, "if dancing had not suddenly grown hateful to me. The theater, the lights, the staring faces. They seem suddenly to open a wide chasm between this little room and the quiet firelight—and you."

For answer Vedorowna got to his feet softly, and going across the room to where a small, long unused piano was pushed against the wall, lifted its lid and touched the keyboard lingeringly.

"Let me play to you," he said. "I learned it as I learned French. It is only a little talent, but sometimes it distracts and soothes."

His fingers dropped into the sweet, half-forgotten cadences of an old French song, and he played it charmingly, with the melodious touch of the musician who knows nothing of technical music but much of the pure melody which instinct has taught him. He played it slowly, and so softly that it sounded like

a distant echo of a song—a faint breath of fairylike melody:

*Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un instant,
Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie.*

He drifted deftly into other songs, old and quaint and sweet, and finally into the exquisite yearning of the "Thais" meditations.

When finally he turned, La Prevosa stood close against his shoulder, as though she had floated there on the soft waves of sound, and he saw that tears were wet upon her cheeks.

V

It was a strange development of a strange personality—half sinister yet with a strain of fineness—this development of Paul Vedorowna in those first winter months in the French capital into a brilliant, restless, dangerous man.

He had sought and obtained employment on one of the great daily papers of Paris, a paper frankly anti-Russian in its policies, and in the columns of this at different times his anonymous political utterances had attracted attention. His mother's knowledge of French early imparted to him and his own subsequent studies stood him now in good stead. He found time to write in his own language a volume of short stories of Russian life and conditions, and this was translated and sold on the boulevards. It also was anonymous, and its weird, brilliant, black and white sketches attracted much notice.

And all about him the great gay city lured with a thousand voices of enchantment, and chief among them the voice and smile of La Prevosa. Yet, although she appeared ever on the verge of passion, she was in reality as far away as the place and power which she meant to share, and which she made it understood were only synonymous with her own yielding. This at first—and later, as she knew him better, a secret tenderness, an ever mounting flame, that in the end was great enough to ask nothing and give for his sake even life itself.

It was a piquant contrast in his existence, and one that appealed to his

restless mind, to return in the small hours from the theater, from some Bohemian restaurant or studio, or smiling, stirred, a little dreamy, yet despite himself half cynical, from the house in the Avenue de Versailles to the somber interior of his own place on the other side of the river.

In his little room back of the smoky, musky habitation of Yussif Patara, a Turkish rug merchant, and his pipes of hasheesh, he would sit alone after his return, a candle burning feebly in an old bronze lamp above his head, a cigarette between those narrow brown predatory fingers of his, his eyes, an agate mask, fixed upon the opposite wall. Before him lay scattered his pamphlets and papers, and the first sheets of a new book which was as dear a dream to him as the thought of a voice in the government of his country, as the desire to stand face to face with the man who had sent Michael Vedorowna and his wife into Siberia.

It was such a small, mean place, this room of his, to contain such an immensity of dreams. Patara had added a square of dull red carpet from his store, to be sure, and there were one or two cushions thick with gold thread from the same source, but the walls were brown and stained, and behind them in the still hours scampering rodents sent down rattling showers of plaster.

The pallet bed was covered with a square of frayed and dingy brocade, but was very hard, and the one window, thick with dust, and the exterior festoonings of industrious spiders, looked only upon a narrow stone court. There was little else here, save the precious manuscript upon the table, for a small packet of papers that proved his identity and the slender jeweled dagger never left his person.

But outside was Paris; outside were opportunity and excitement and the chance of fame. To Vedorowna the very midnight bells seemed calling to him of place, of power. Yet there were times when the dark little room was witness to a fury of discouragement, of impotent despair—moments when the words he wanted refused to write them-

selves, or those already written seemed futile and out of tune—moments when his quest of the man who had injured him seemed hopeless, and the political future of Poland a dark and inextricable tangle into which neither his pen nor his revolutionary doctrines and unsparing work among the clubs and societies to which he belonged were able to let any light.

And in these moments the golden eyes of La Prevosa smiled down with encouragement upon him, with tenderness, with promise; yet, although stirring one side of his nature with a definite allurement, it left in his heart a curious coldness, a chill emptiness. A woman may love with the greatness of an archangel; she may give herself, her mind, her future, to a man, possess his gratitude, his affection, the right to his loyalty; but a face seen in a passing crowd, the glance of an eye, the pressure of another woman's hand may have ensnared his soul and taken from her the substance of his love, leaving her only its shadow, while she strives and starves—and tries to smile.

And Vedorowna, with the warmth of Elise Villiers's lips fresh in his memory, had seen such a woman, spoken with her.

Calm-eyed, chaste, fresh as the morning, she sometimes seemed to smile upon him in his dreams—and in a dream he attempted to bridge the gulf of fortune and of circumstance that lay between them. Again, with prescient shrinking from life, he fingered the dagger he carried, half tempted to turn it upon himself and so end a futile comedy. At these times he went quietly into Yusuf's shop, took a pipe from a small cabinet upon the wall, and returning, flung himself upon his bed.

VI

LA PREVOSA, resplendent in a dress of shining black scales, with a cloudy foam of dull, transparent black about her feet and a glimmer of topazes about her throat that matched the amber of her long eyes, crossed her arms upon the

table before her and looked thoughtfully at the man opposite her.

"How can one shape one's life beautifully, Vasatasi," she said then, "when life is broken up into little pieces called details?"

Her companion looked at her for a moment with a sort of deliberate appraising, then smiled into his coffee cup.

"Fit them together," he answered. His manner was slightly oracular. "Little to my taste," said the dancer pettishly. "Details—and time—were made for slaves. Does a great diplomat—like yourself—bother after a *coup d'état* with details? They are for the small fry. Details—bah! Did Cleopatra stoop to gather them up out of the dust of a triumph?" She drew a big golden rose out of a vase on the table and crushed it against her face impatiently.

"Cleopatra?" Vasatasi added a little brandy to his coffee with a masklike countenance. "I did not know that you aspired to the role."

He stirred the coffee delicately, inspecting his hostess narrowly without seeming to do so.

A few months before, seeing her for the first time, her slim willowy grace, her eyes of hot yellow sunlight, her look of passionate promise had charmed him. But later, her fine wit, her native intelligence and keenness, had commanded an attention far less easily to be wearied than the mere contemplation of an ivory skin or a wandlike ankle. For Elise Villiers had been of the people before she flowered into an exotic bloom, and she had much of the shrewd philosophy of the Gallic peasant.

By degrees, and half without intention, Vasatasi had confided to her certain plots and plans at work in his busy scheming brain, and on this evening—it being Sunday and she free—had answered her summons to dine with the conviction that more lay behind. Vasatasi had heard rumors. He waited now—provokingly—for her to speak.

When she had tossed away the rose, drummed with her fingers on the table, and peered into the dregs of her coffee,

she spoke suddenly, and to some purpose. "I have found your man, Vasatasi," she said.

The Russian's small black eyes took a spark of red. This thing was near his heart, or near the ambition which passed for it.

"If I may anticipate a confidence, you mean this young torch of treason, Vedorowna?" he said. "Yet are you sure that you do not allow your enthusiasm for an undoubtedly interesting personality to endow it with qualities it does not possess?"

Prince Demetrius Vasatasi, be it known, piqued himself upon a strain of royal blood, and was convinced that he and he alone possessed the hereditary right of independent monarchical rule in Poland. Yet so cleverly did he conceal his ambitions, so secretly did his agents stir up revolution and foment rebellion and anarchy among troops and peasantry, that he remained high in the confidence of the Russian court, having easy access to the heads of various departments and close to the very throne which he sought to undermine. Yet the man, fabulously rich both through inheritance and by his own manipulations, and securely and highly placed, had a gipsy's taste for liberty and adventure and a vast appetite for power and the command of men. Life for him was alternately a playground and a chessboard, a rose garden or a battlefield. Now in the full tide of his secret schemes to govern and possess Poland, snatching it in the confusion consequent upon the removal by one of the most trusted and fanatical of his adherents of the head of Russian power, the idea of Vedorowna as one of these agents, cognizant as he was of the man's writings and ability, seemed to him dangerous.

La Prevosa, he reflected, was only a woman, after all, spreading an iridescent cobweb for gilded flies.

But the dancer was in earnest. She leaned suddenly across the table, her hands clasped under her breast, her eyes compelling. "Nonsense!" she said to him. "I know the man. He has the qualities of a statesman and a dip-

lomat rather than of a mere secret agent. See him, listen to what he has to say at least—judge for yourself."

Vasatasi relented a little. After all, there might be something in it, and he was willing to put himself out considerably to please the incomparable Villiers, whether her whim were diamonds or politics. For himself, after all, he reflected, he had nothing to fear. He was too safely entrenched to be easily shaken. He moved warily. There existed no scrap of writing or of evidence against him. His agents and figure-heads would bear all the brunt of possible discovery, and to make assurance doubly sure, he had gradually transferred most of his holdings to French interests and banks, so that in any event France would insure a safe and well lined harbor of refuge.

He lighted a cigarette, folded his arms, his lean brown hands standing out like pale bronze carvings against the black of his evening coat, and leaning back, prepared to listen judicially.

"He—Paul Vedorowna—is coming here presently to meet you," the woman said. "Believe it or not, Vasatasi, he is the subtlest creature I have ever met, and the most dangerous. His parents were arrested for participation in a Nihilist plot and sent to Siberia. Where, I ask, would you find an instrument so ready tuned to your hand? No paid mercenary will work as this man will work—hot with ambition and revenge. Promise him the downfall of Russian autocracy and a hand in Polish politics, and I verily believe he would contrive to set all Europe by the ears to achieve it. I can imagine him in this capital and in that, disguised, subtle, alert, winning with his personal magnetism what remnants of adherents to his cause and yours that promises and money failed to win. Oh, I have studied him. He is resourceful, Vasatasi, and too wary ever to let the point of his rapier be off guard for a second.

"And with all this," she concluded, throwing herself back in her chair, lacing her fingers behind her head and looking at the sphinxlike Vasatasi with challenging eyes, "he has a gift of the devil

for languages, and can pick up a knowledge of any of them in a fortnight."

Vasatasi moved and was about to speak, when a step crossed the room beyond and the door opened.

In the *chiaro-oscuro* of the flickering candles and firelight Paul Vedorowna stood for a moment, silent, slender, alert, his eyes narrowed to two threads of greenish agate between the dark lines of his lashes, his face, usually so impenetrable, quickened with excitement. The dancer looked at him with a flush of secret pride. Here was a man who, whatever his sins of omission and commission, was at least in many things fine and sincere. In comparison with Vasatasi and worldlings of his type to whom no woman was more than a charming toy, a painted butterfly, to be flung down or crushed at the first hint of presumption or claim on her part or of weariness on his, Vedorowna seemed more a man. Vasatasi played the game of life because it amused him, for personal ambition and because manipulation and rule allured him. Vedorowna played for a principle, for the future of a country that he loved and the hope of fame rather than wealth, of power for good rather than worldly advancement in the literary and political career opening before him. The only dark spot upon his shield was that desire of revenge for an injustice. As she looked from him to Vasatasi the lips of La Prevosa, the complex, the unreadable, parted with a mingling of passion and of personal ambition. One could not always dance, she reflected, but one could—if sharing the power and place of a successful diplomat—make others do so.

VII

THOSE were mad weeks, when the cup of life brimmed over with sparkle and zest. Paris was in the brilliant height of its January season, and Vedorowna, fresh from the desolate snows, the savage silence of his own land, plunged into it with a gay heart. Vasatasi, impressed with his personality, had let him glimpse the first firing lines of intrigue

that surrounded a vast citadel of plots where at the given moment a mine would be fired whose echoes would stir Europe. He had been present in a house overlooking the Quai Voltaire, and in others in the Chausée d'Antin and the Boulevard Michel at secret baccarat and roulette, that was in reality only a conference of strange, silent, dark-faced men, all members of an order that bore two linked triangles pricked upon the back of one hand.

And the head and front of it all was Vasatasi. Yet so well did the princely plotter keep the threads within his hand that nothing was known, nothing even suspected. A word from him controlled every issue, while his death or downfall would have meant complete disintegration of the whole deadly fabric of Nihilism and revolution.

To the young man in his hours of leisure Paris was a vast playground. Yet, though he played often and madly, and though it was to Elise Villiers that he returned with the tale of some adventure upon his lips or for criticism of some new page of his book now taking definite and brilliant form, somehow life seemed to be going awry. Not the life of his ambitions, but that inner life which had to do with some dim ideal that sometimes rose before him in a woman's calm, proud face sometimes whispered to him with vague stirrings of lofty things, that roused in him a strange, reluctant shame.

It was not long after he had become known as the anonymous author whose Russian sketches had proven such a brilliant success that he had appeared in the drawing-rooms of a witty Frenchwoman, whose fad was acquaintance with lions born in the jungles of Bohemia, and was led gently therefrom by her own gracious hands into social sweetness and light. This woman, Madame de Tourville, was ready to stand his social sponsor, and in the course of an evening introduced him to the daughter of an English baronet who was wintering in Paris.

Love has many roads, but the sweetest is the road upon which he comes swiftly, in silence, with a sudden pas-

sionate sweetness that blinds the eyes and sets the heart aquiver with joy and a sense of pain.

Into the mind and soul of Paul Vedorowna in that instant of her coming into his life there crept a curious pang, half sadness and half poignant sweetness. Jocelyn Carstairs was young, calm-eyed as the morning, delicate as the hoar frost in an April dawn. Yet despite the violetlike quality of her exquisite youth, she had a curiously stately air, a sort of proud distinction that seemed coldness until she smiled. She had smiled when Vedorowna spoke to her, and from that moment the woman who had literally given him a cup of cold water, who had aided and advanced him, and whose love grew deeper every day, became to him like a shadow. He knew that his loyalty belonged to Elise Villiers, and he hated himself, yet could free neither mind nor heart from their sweet obsession.

He saw Jocelyn Carstairs often, but if La Prevosa knew or guessed she gave no sign. Quiescent when he grew restive, acquiescent when he absented himself, her welcome was always ready when he returned. Meanwhile to her world she was an object of mingled adoration and pursuit, this new love with its unaccustomed pain and uncertainty making her sparkle with but fresh luster to a public of which she was the rose-crowned idol of an hour. But the Elise Villiers, peasant born, who dwelt under a glittering pseudonym, knew very well the life of a rose, and sometimes shuddered to see some poor yellowed flower hanging limp from its withered stalk. Since she had known Paul Vedorowna there had come into her life for the first time a love that was fine and great and unselfish. And now a girl's smile had crumbled the fairy fabric in her hands and snatched the cup from her lips.

VIII

It was Madame de Tourville, sensation hunter and indefatigable hostess, who first conceived the idea of having the famous dancer, La Prevosa, give the

new dance she was said to be contemplating in the De Tourville ballroom to a brilliant company before she offered it to the world at large.

Madame de Tourville had had great singers to sing for her guests, great actors to recite, great musicians to play. Now, after infinite manipulation, she produced invitations to her world to see a marvelous new dance, with some of her own guests as the secondary actors therein, twenty-four hours before it would be given to the public. The whole was to be preceded by tableaux, in one of which Jocelyn Carstairs would appear, and the lady plumed herself on a unique entertainment.

Elise Villiers had acceded to the request the more easily since it gave her an opportunity to enter a house where Vedorowna was welcome and where she herself would otherwise never have been received. She wanted to see Jocelyn Carstairs; she wanted to watch Paul Vedorowna. She was amused when she was told that Prince Vasatasi had been chosen to appear as Holofernes to her Judith. She rallied him upon it one evening, but Vasatasi only shrugged his shoulders with the dislike of a man of affairs to make a spectacle of himself.

"We all do what Eugénie de Tourville tells us to do," he grumbled. "At least, however, in this case I think I might know what imbecilities I am expected to perform."

La Prevosa laughed delightedly. "But one person knows anything about it," she said.

"And that one person is Vedorowna, I imagine." The flash of cynicism brought a quick red into her cheek.

"Nobody is to know," she repeated. "I will show you what to do the evening before the thing takes place. You have not much more to do than look pleasant. I am the central figure, *mon ami*."

"But you will have to appear in the correct costume of an ancient Jewish king, which Madame de Tourville is having prepared for you," she added maliciously. "Maybe she will make you wear a crown."

Vasatasi rose in disgust. "I am

seeking the crown of power," he said, "not a paste mockery. If I had not given my word to appear in this masquerade I should withdraw."

La Prevosa propped her chin in her palms reflectively. "I cannot understand," she said, "why you should seek fresh power when you already have so much, nor a new crown when you already own the arms and coronet of a great prince. One might think you a simple citizen from the way you suppress all evidences of rank."

"I hate a coat of arms and a coronet sprawled all over my carriage panels and notepaper," said Vasatasi irritably. "It has become as *bourgeois* as the rage for pedigrees and ancestral portraits."

He put his hand into his pocket and drew out a small oval miniature case of gold. It was closed, hiding whatever it held, but on the back were engraved a coat of arms and a crown.

"I do not believe you nor many other people have seen this," he said. "They belong to the name of Vasatasi."

La Prevosa looked for a long minute. When she raised her head at length there was a curious pallor upon her face, and her golden eyes were dark and glancing. "No," she said slowly, "I have never seen them before."

And although the night was warm with the first breath of approaching spring, she shuddered as though something had chilled her to the heart.

The next morning Paul Vedorowna came into her attic room and threw himself down moodily, his elbows on his knees as he leaned forward, his nervous brown hands bending the riding crop he held, his hair over his eyes in stormy disorder. It was ten o'clock, and he had been riding far into the country since dawn. A quarter of an hour ago he had left his horse, which belonged to Vasatasi, at the stables in the rear of the latter's abode in the Rue St. Honoré, and still in his riding clothes, had gone to Elise Villiers—because she was a woman and loved him and knew all his secrets—and because a girl's fair face haunted and tortured him, and

he knew that in all loyalty he was bound to the one woman and separated from the other by a vast social and financial chasm.

For the moment he was blackly depressed, in one of those stormy broodings which underlay the usual brilliant gaiety of his outward seeming. Obsessed by a cloud of sinister apprehensions, he felt out of accord with the blue morning about him, with its tender turquoise-colored sky, its delicate gray-blue mists, its warm air blowing blossom-scented from wood and field.

Finally he looked up from under his drawn brows. "There is great excitement over your forthcoming dance," he said. "Perhaps it is just as well that both Vasatasi and I should be considered as having no weightier concern in life at this moment than the tableaux in this De Tourville affair. I am keeping the dagger ready for your use."

La Prevosa looked at him with startled eyes that she hid quickly with her lashes.

"I do not think I shall use it now," she said slowly. "I asked it, I know, but I think perhaps in your secret heart you condemn a lack of sentiment which could use for such a purpose as this dance a thing that has so many tragic memories. I wish you would make me a promise." She looked at him with troubled, yearning eyes.

"Promise me," she went on quickly, "that you will put the dagger away and never think again of the injury it represents. Your mother would have wished it so. Think of your book—of your career—of Poland—and the people whom with your pen and your power you have sworn to liberate. Would your mother have wished you to sacrifice all that for a mere personal revenge? No. Ah, no—you cannot say she would. Promise me you will show that dagger to no one—to *no one*—that you will never try to find the man to whom it belongs."

She looked at him beseechingly, and for a moment Vedorowna was moved and troubled. He sat with his frowning eyes bent upon the horizon. Even the pleading touch of her soft hand after a

moment failed to win the smile she craved.

At length he drew a long breath and got to his feet. "Don't ask that of me," he said, "at least not yet, until I become used to the idea of leaving such a man unpunished. Have you forgotten what he did?"

He walked to the window and looked out a moment across the roofs. She was afraid to urge him further, to arouse in him a train of thought which she wished to avoid. At that moment of poignant anxiety for him, and yearning for the affection that he had given her in the first weeks of their companionship, she sank the siren that had been in the woman she was fast becoming. All thought of personal ambition through him she was relinquishing day by day as her love, unseen by him, grew broader and deeper and more impossible to be denied.

All the vicissitudes of her stormy life—its povertyes and its ultimate successes, its passions and its desires, its wine, its roses and also its ashes—she seemed to have left far behind her, as a pilgrim upon the mountains looks back and sees the sunlit plains and the little cities of men lying infinitesimal in the distance. She was upon the steep mountain side now, climbing toward the goal of a great love. And soon she would have reached the ultimate height. With a sudden impulse she laid her arms about his neck and looked into his eyes.

"Paul," she whispered, "do you know how much I love you? Enough to give you to another woman if so you would be happiest. I love you enough to die, if dying would do you one moment's good."

Shaken by her words and look, he stooped and kissed her, yet as she clung to him the thought of Jocelyn Carstairs was in the mind of each, and each knew the thought was there. After a moment, still encircled by his arm, she sought nervously to relieve the tension of both their moods by drawing him to the window.

The mist-shrouded city of Paris that Paul Vedorowna had looked upon in the

chill disillusion of a November day was become a city of riotous April blossomings. It was spring in Paris now—a very early spring of warm, moist days full of the odors of damp earth and white wet blooms. On the black damp boughs of the trees the swelling brown buds were shaking out upon an April wind the crumpled silk of their furled leaves, whose glistening green shone in the sunlight like the veined wings of dragon flies or jade gray beetles. And everywhere the breath of violets and jonquils was in the warm winds.

The two watchers at the window forgot presently their several grievances with fate, and allowed themselves like two children in a spirit of *camaraderie* to be beguiled out into the spring morning. Changeable as quicksilver, as only the artist and the Latin knows how to be, La Prevosa, the tragedy of her mood flung resolutely away, ran gaily for her hat and went out with the man she loved, chattering as lightly as though neither she nor he had a thought beyond the gracious noonday, with its amber sun, its cool purple shadows, its tender mist blue distances.

It pleased her to wander off like two children into the country. She wanted to leave restaurants, orchids, theaters behind her for an hour, and strip herself of her environment as she had stripped herself of her jewels and laces. She wore a simple white dress of thin linen, with a wide hat shading her eyes and banded with a broad black ribbon. There was nothing in the dress to court notice certainly, yet Vedorowna saw that she was continually observed—not with recognition but with curiosity and interest. She decreed that they should take the steam tramway which followed the Avenue de Versailles outside her gates.

"I am quite *bourgeoise* to live in the Avenue de Versailles," she said as she climbed to the top of the unwieldy vehicle. "But I adore my garden and my tree tops too much—and my horses are as swift as the wind."

She looked back smiling toward the city. Beside them lay the Seine with its multitudinous bridges airily spanning

its clear green against a cloudless sky. Along the *quais* the shipping lay crowded, the barges bright with potted flowers, the sunlight touching all with magic. In the foreground La Galliote threw its red and gold, upheld by monstrous figures, from shore to shore, and nearer yet the bridge of Napoleon stood like a stately ivory carving, its multiplicity of arches like Gothic windows high in air, each outlining a space of stainless blue.

For a while they rode in silence, content to bask in the warm sunlight and let the world go by. At length, however, Elise Villiers aroused herself, tired in a flash of her novel surroundings, and at the next stopping place they descended to a floating *ponton* anchored to the *quai* and boarded one of the pleasant little craft that ply up and down the river, sacred to the peasant, the artisan, the student—all those to whom the difference between two sous and six is an item of daily calculation.

There were few, however, at this hour going down the river, and they had the forward and uncovered part of the deck to themselves. "We will stay here and come back to Paris without stirring," Elise said gaily, and they turned their faces to the fresh wind and the green stretch of winding river before them. Woman-like, she was gay because her mood was dark with an anxiety she dared not let him see.

"Are you never nervous about this new dance and its success?" asked Vedorowna, looking wonderingly into her brilliant face. "It is only three weeks now to Madame de Tourville's tableaux and your own first night to the audiences of Paris. Personally I think it will mark you as the very greatest of artists. From what I know of it, it cannot fail. But you need my dagger—not an imitation."

For the moment the yellow tigress eyes of the woman beside him flared, then shrank. "We are the servants of fate," she said slowly when she had been silent for a while. "We seek to do one good, and in the doing only injure one irreparably. We are the instruments

of destiny. Fate is a strange thing. We cannot escape it. We go to the ends of the earth to avoid a danger—and there we find it awaiting us. We would give our life blood for some friend—and it is our own unconscious hand that holds out to him death in a goblet of wine. Yet sometimes fate permits that we ourselves may drink the draught that unknowing we have prepared."

She fell silent with a moody brow. Vedorowna forebore to break in upon her thought, but as the gay little boat swept onward toward the green and laughing country, a vague foreboding, formless, intangible as a whisper breathed upon the dark, rose in his soul and laid a cold touch upon his heart.

IX

PARIS is very like its own champagne. Germany intoxicates with beer, stupidly and heavily. The fiery vodka of Russia is a slough into which men fall and become drugged. The warm red wines of the South are heavy, cloying, lethargic. The ale of England is an anchorage for the brain—but the champagne of France intoxicates charmingly, airily, with distinction, with mirth, with wit.

And Paris is the champagne at the banquet of the nations. Its life, to those who have the knowledge and the spirit to live it as it should be lived—lightly and gaily, with an exquisite sadness and as exquisite a mirth, is a crystal goblet filled with sparkling amber bubbles. It makes its special appeal to the artist and the Bohemian—whether of soul or actual circumstance. It calls with an insistent voice to the poet, the artists of form and of color, the writers of things that are tragic and things that are charming with youth and springtime, to the gay and the sad alike.

To Paul Vedorowna it called with the voices of all these things, and the artist and the Bohemian in him leaped up and for a while ran riot in the intoxication of the unaccustomed.

Elise Villiers, though no older than

he, capped his twenty-five years, matured though he was, by a cynical experience in what to a woman so often seems the childish subterfuges of men. Yet now for the first time in her life a man's touch—or the absence of it—swelled her throat, while the pulses beat at it when his lips met hers, or at a breath of indifference or neglect choked her and gripped her heart with clutching fingers. Still, although her lips whitened sometimes, as must the lips of every man or woman whose love is nailed upon the cross of an artistic temperament, she knew how to let Vedorowna see her smile indulgently or indifferently at his plunges into the maelstrom of a great city's excitations. She knew, too, how gradually to withdraw herself and with a quivering heart to be seen with other men—to fling a laugh where he had expected a caress, or a jest, the more brilliant for the tears beneath, until his sense of conquest with her merged into uncertainty.

And uncertainty is the mainspring of passion, the source of desire. It can kindle dead ashes, fan a fading spark or make an already fierce flame fiercer. In Elise Villiers's philosophy a man loves a woman only while he thinks someone else does, and desires her only so long as she is unattained.

Vedorowna was roused presently to find himself dispossessed where he had fancied himself secure, and with this awoke his instincts of ownership and pursuit.

She was a creature of a thousand moods, but of only one consuming ambition, and that did not dwell in the rose garden of her already attained success as a dancer. Political intrigue and political power! At this time she coveted these laurels which grew high above her roses, and panted for them. She knew that Vasatasi, in spite of his confidences, had no mind for a woman—and a dancer at that—to share the consummation of his schemes; yet she meant to use him through Paul Vedorowna, his agent, and on the royal road which he should have prepared march in triumph to her goal. Or so in the early days of her friendship with

Vedorowna she thought—before a great love had broken her at its chariot wheels.

But she was far from that yet, and in Vedorowna's arms she hoped to taste a vibrant emotion that would be like the first dreams of youth and the last ripened passion of maturity—the snowdrop and the passion flower gathered from the same stalk.

He might pass evening after evening in a café in Montmartre or the Quartier, surrounded by a whirl of shrieking, laughing girls and Bohemian students until well into the small hours. He might stake and lose all he possessed to the last sou in a night, and win it back the next at baccarat. He might throw himself on a horse at dawn and ride fiend-pursued for hours while she awaited him in her house in the Avenue de Versailles—yet for these things he won forgiveness, since it was the temperament which prompted them which interested and attracted her to the point of fascination.

Femininity as a plurality had no terrors for her, and when he evinced a desire for the mad play, the reckless abandonment or the feverish moody brooding which alike were all part of him, she held her reins indulgently loose. It was only when she discovered that a lithe, dark Spanish girl, Alzira by name, who was making a beginning by singing in one of the rude *café chantants* which line the edge of the Seine in lower Paris, had soldered a gold neck chain about his throat and would have soldered her own vibrating olive arms if she could, that Elise Villiers felt herself shaken with a rage and determination of which she had not believed her own nature capable. It was then that Vedorowna found mockery on her mouth where he had expected kisses, and going to her house confident of access, found her absent or was denied admittance while he heard her laugh mingled with other voices in the golden drawing-room.

It was then that she aroused that uncertainty which was like a spur. The half-attraction which the dark Alzira had spun and thrown about him snapped on the instant, as a few days

later her golden neck chain snapped from about his throat as he tore it off and flung it into her lap.

There were so many women in the world, so many scarlet lips as yet untasted, that for the sake of the least of these he had no mind to antagonize the golden butterfly whose physical charm to him was becoming only secondary to the subtle lure of her quick mind and the aid she offered to his ambitions. Although he loved her, with one of the many loves men know until the real comes, he was never for a moment forgetful of the fact that he could not afford definitely to alienate her. He unlocked the despairing arms of the panting human creature, who, uncalculating, had been fascinated and undone by his magnetic and caressing personality, and flung himself disgustedly out into the street.

Behind him Alzira lay prone and tearless in her narrow tawdry room, her thin hands clenched desperately upon a broken chain of gold.

That night it was his own arms which sought the mocking form of La Prevosa, as, freshly entered from the theater, she stood swaying before a pier glass in her attic room. She was trying certain postures and movements that she intended to use in her conception of the Dance of Death which she was working out, and which was beginning to emerge radiant against the dark background of its historical reality; and she affected to pay small heed to his protestations, his explanations, his avowals.

She wove her white arms above her head laughing, flung the name of Alzira in his face and danced away from under his touch like a cloud of vapor or thistledown in the wind. She was dressed in length after length of moon-colored gauze that shimmered as she moved, and released from the twirling gyrations of her dance, lay in billows about her on the floor shot with strange blue and amber lights. The swell of her throat, the scarlet line of her lips had never looked more alluring.

Vedorowna's sparkling eyes grew dark and still as he watched her. True she

was a bridge to a means, but she was also a definite literary inspiration. In common with most artists, he was quite capable of playing upon every chord of her nature if only some harmony would emerge which he might place before the world through the medium of his literary art. And there is no form of art which is so pitiless as that of the analytical writer. Not the painter's, nor the sculptor's, nor even the poet's, which concern themselves chiefly with externals. For the analyst will crucify a great love to secure all the expressions of a tragic emotion for some new literary achievement.

Yet apart from this, La Prevosa was a very beautiful woman and withal one who loved him. She had called into desperate play every art to hold him, and he was, after all, only one part cold-blooded ambitionist and one part man.

The man was predominant now. He ignored her evasions and went to her masterfully, laying his hands upon her slim wrists. For the first time his will, his watchful cynicism were caught up and whirled like dry leaves in the sirocco of an emotion which, if but momentary, was yet stronger than himself. A dim ideal of a dream woman! What was that to these eager kisses of Elise Villiers's scarlet mouth as unre-pulsed he bent over her?

X

VERY beautiful women are seldom very clever. When they are, they juggle with diplomats, light the torch of war and upset kingdoms.

The lights were bright in the golden drawing-room of La Prevosa's house in the Avenue de Versailles, but every window was carefully shuttered, every door locked and barred. In the dining room a half-dozen people sat about the table, and among the grapes and roses, the silver dishes and the wine glasses upon it, that impatient hands had pushed awry, were maps, plans of fortifications, lists of men and arms, diagrams of a potentate's movements.

Elise Villiers sat at one end of the table, and near her Paul Vedorowna, plainly dressed, close-lipped, alert, sat listening to Vasatasi, who was giving his final instructions. He himself was not to be implicated until the ultimate moment of confusion arising from a monarch's assassination and the uprising of the Polish adherents should arrive. But he held all those who served him in the hollow of his hand, and Elise Villiers, as she looked from him to Vedorowna, felt her heart contract with dread as she realized that Vasatasi held the liberty and life of the man she loved absolutely in his power, himself remaining wholly immune. A word from him, and Paul Vedorowna—brilliant artist and famous *litterateur* though he was, could be arrested as a common spy and conspirator against Russia. Proofs of his complicity in a plot which would be called Nihilistic were not wanting, to which evidence the fame of his writings would rather add than detract. And she alone knew upon what a hair Vedorowna's relations with Vasatasi hung.

As she watched the two men she found herself praying breathlessly that Paul Vedorowna might never know in what relation he stood to the man whose interests he was serving at the risk of his life, and whose patronage he craved for future political advancement.

Vasatasi knocked the ash from his cigarette and rose to his feet. "It is understood then," he said finally, "that on the night following this mummery at Madame de Tourville's house—which will, at all events, serve excellently as a mask to our movements—that I give the word. Within twenty-four hours after that we leave for Russia, where we will find the stage set. Each one of you knows his part. Let us hope the play will be a success."

The conference was ended. The last word had been said, the last mine laid ready for the torch.

On fire with the thought, Vedorowna rose and began to walk impatiently backward and forward in the room. At his movement the dancer started to her feet also. She took up her full wine-

glass and with her fine dramatic gesture held it aloft.

"Poland!" she cried.

There was a moment's pause. Then sharply the men about her raised their glasses high and drank the toast with her.

When they were gone Vedorowna stood for a moment with folded arms looking somber-eyed into the wood fire on the hearth. If he had seemed matured before, this dark, moody man with his reckless laugh was hardly to be recognized as the Paul Vedorowna who, chilled and weary and mud-splashed, had entered the gates of Paris. The lines of his face were growing more purposeful, and there was a sternness and a repression in his whole air which sat well upon this new dignity. Between the dark brows a line was graving itself, and the narrow eyes looked out upon the world like a fencer's whose foil never leaves his hand.

As she looked at him a great wistfulness grew in the woman's eyes—yet she hesitated and drooped before him. The coquettices that had won the boy seemed like tinkling bells to the man. But at least he owed her much.

She went to him and stood near him, but there was no confidence in her bearing—rather the pleading of some dumb thing that wistfully solicits a caress. Toward him, her dazzle, her sparkle, her gay audacity were forever quenched.

"When the dream comes true," she said softly and brokenly, "when success is ours, then love can be ours, too. We shall have earned the right to be happy together."

He did not reply as he turned to leave her, but he bent and kissed her hands gravely—almost, as it seemed to her, absently.

XI

THE noises of the theater came only very faintly to the dancer as she sat before the mirror of her dressing table. She had arrived early, and there were a number of acts still on the bill before the scenery for her dance would be set.

As she slowly unscrewed the tops of the various boxes before her, she peered anxiously at her face in the glass and thought that it looked white and a trifle haggard.

"I shall never hold him, because I am a dancer with my name in everybody's mouth," she reflected bitterly. "At first I was ambitious for him and through him, yet I would lay down my own ambitions now forever to be of a moment's service to him. I care for him already more than it is good for a woman to care for any man, yet I cannot touch him—really—not really. I cannot make him care as I care; and yet I love him—I love him."

She opened one of the porcelain boxes of paints before her, looked at it an instant absently, and with sudden passion dashed it from her.

"There never was a man born who did not hold in his heart some impossible ideal of a woman," she mused, her head propped between her hands upon the table before her—"some calm-eyed creature who would never understand him, never be his friend, yet who would satisfy every inherited instinct of his soul for a purely negative goodness."

She roused herself, and taking up a golden snake wound it absently about her arm, then untwisted it savagely and threw it aside. Her maid entered and began with smooth deftness to lift various shining costumes from their trays and lay them out ready for use.

From the stage came faintly the echo of a popular song, then the sharp rattling shower of quick applause. The maid had closed the door carelessly and it had swung partly open. Through the aperture was disclosed a stack of frayed and bedaubed canvas scenery. A stage-hand passed in his shirt sleeves, his face shiny with toil. A moment later a spangled gauzy figure in a preposterous hat ran by to an adjoining dressing room holding up a long beruffled train.

The maid hastened to close the door, and turned on an extra electric lamp near the mirror.

The room was very small, but beside the dressing table and her trunk with its trays of costumes, the dancer had man-

aged to place a couch with a bit of old rose brocade thrown across it, a mountain of pillows and a silk rug of purplish pinks upon the floor. The unshaded electric bulbs threw a strong white light over the dressing table as the dresser with her sure touch began to arrange the shining brown hair of the woman before her, clasping it with a thick barbaric band of silver that held a single huge dark silvery moonstone upon the forehead. The dancer eyed the make-up boxes before her wearily, then with a sudden movement pushed them all away. "I'll do without it," she said pettishly.

"But, madame," expostulated the woman, staring over her head into the mirror at the dead white face with its delicate contours and shadows, its thin scarlet lips and golden eyes as darkly glowing as topazes set under the frowning brows. "But, madame—that is impossible! Before the footlights madame will appear—oh, but like a ghost!" She threw out her hands to show how utterly out of the question was such a proceeding.

La Prevosa got up sharply and shook the dressing gown of yellow laces that she wore around her to the floor.

"It is my *métier* to make a sensation," she said bitterly. "I shall do so tonight. For heaven's sake, Françoise, spare me your eternal exclamation points and bring me my dress."

The dancer had chosen in one of her movements to represent the mist. The billows of gauze which the maid shook out and draped around her shone like a moon-shot haze upon a gray sea. A white fire seemed to dart through the opalescent folds; faint purples seemed to emerge from their shadows; then the effect of moonlit twilight was lost again in the dun gray of a driving wind-swept rain. The maid brought great moonstones and clasped them here and there, wound a chain of them about the dancer's throat, and placed some mistlike fabric in her hands that under her incredibly swift convolutions would spread out like the spray from a fountain or fall like rain about her.

As she gathered up her gauzes, her

act was called, and she went out and stood in the wings awaiting her moment of entrance. As the curtain rose and she floated upon the stage there was a low murmur of surprise. This, indeed, was a changed creature from the brilliant and dazzling figure that her audiences had begun to expect. Caprice and a sudden distaste had led her to abandon the make-up. She would, in her present mood, have done it had her act demanded the most brilliant coloring. As it happened, however, her pallor fitted well into the thing she represented, and was accepted on the part of her audience as another of her masterly characterizations.

She did not look into the crowded house as she danced. Usually she did so, and flung her sparkling glances wide. But tonight she was as somber and as moody as a brooding storm. She danced without a smile. But there was an electric atmosphere that emanated from her whole personality, from her frowning narrowed eyes, her bitter lips, that held her audience spellbound. This was a different creature, indeed, from the dancer they had known.

As she was finishing her dance, whirling her gauzes around her like gray driving stormclouds, she happened to glance toward one of the lower boxes. There were three people in it—a rather stately woman of perhaps forty, a very young girl, exquisite in her soft white dress with pearls circling her throat, a great bouquet of white roses in her hand, and a man who was looking at the girl with an expression that went to La Prevosa's heart like a knife.

The man was Paul Vedorowna.

Was it only necessary, she wondered, to be a young girl of good family and to wear a white dress and pearls, symbols of innocence, to satisfy a man's craving for the ideal, and win from him glances that might have caressed a shrine?

And she, La Prevosa, who painted her face and danced before a nightly audience in a few yards of gauze, she had his kisses and his ardent glances and maybe—his contempt.

She faltered in her dance; her draper-

ies fell around her; leaden, inert, she lost the thread of her movement, stood motionless, self-forgetful for a moment—then in a breath had whirled away. A little later a perturbed manager came forward and announced that the dancer was ill. She would appear no more that night.

She waited at the theater, hoping that Paul would come to inquire for her. She had put on a soft white dress and wore a string of pearls about her throat. Both the costume and the thoughts that prompted it were pathetic but she did not know it. Her brain felt on fire but her hands were like ice.

Oh, the hideous waiting for a step that did not come! She sat on her tiger skin rug and held those icy hands to the fire that did not warm them, and shuddered and burned alternately. Every movement, every footstep below stairs, seemed to draw her tense nerves into renewed rigidity. Sometimes she smoothed out the folds of the white dress. Sometimes she glanced at the clock. Midnight struck with leaden finality. He had not come.

She rose shivering. Her throat ached. She had a desolate strange feeling of emptiness and aloofness. The things of life seemed unreal and far away. She stood in the middle of the familiar room and looked about her slowly like a person who awakes from sleep.

As she stood there was a quick tread on the stairs and Vedorowna came into the room and went to her anxiously.

"You are not ill? I got away as soon as I could and came."

She turned away her head. All the sparkling coquettices of the woman were suddenly submerged in a stifling wave of dreariness and hopelessness. A month ago she had met his neglect and his Bohemian adventures with assurance, with a dazzling armor of indifference that had won him back. But now something in his glance as he had looked at the young girl at his side that evening had disarmed her. She suddenly felt very tired. She would have liked to hide her face on his breast and weep childishly, helplessly. She felt like

a child from whose hands some dearly cherished treasure has slipped, to shatter at its feet.

"I was ill," she said; "I could not dance. I am sorry I spoiled your evening's entertainment. Were your friends very much disappointed?"

He looked at her in surprise. He himself had not known what his glance revealed that night.

"Of course; but that does not matter. Madame de Tourville—you know her—by sight at least." She winced but he did not perceive it. "I have told you how interested she has become in me as the author of those Russian sketches that first appeared anonymously. Madame de Tourville asked me to dinner tonight. Naturally I went. Miss Carstairs was there also, no one else. When dinner was over Madame de Tourville mentioned that she had a box and wanted to see you dance. I could not refuse. But all that is of no consequence. I am glad you are better."

He touched her hand. She withdrew it from him after a moment, but he did not see that she raised to her lips the fingers he had caressed.

"Who is Miss Carstairs?" she asked. "She seemed very lovely."

Instantly she saw in him a reluctance to discuss the girl or even to mention her name. She felt it as quickly as though he had spoken his disinclination aloud, and her heart contracted cruelly.

"Miss Carstairs is an English girl," he said briefly, "the daughter of a baronet. She is wintering in Paris." He turned and went toward the fire. As he did so a white rose fell from his coat and lay upon the floor.

La Prevosa stooped and picked it up. She stooped like an old woman, all her floating lightness gone, and gave it to him. "You dropped it," she said.

Vedorowna took it from her without remark and held it in his hand.

When he left her a few minutes later she saw that he still cherished it.

"You must rest," he said. "Sleep well."

But to the woman who saw the door close upon him, as upon every desire of her soul, the woman who must for all

her nights paint her lips and dance and smile, it seemed that she would never sleep again.

XII

It was snowing hard on the Siberian plains, and above the great white steppes the low black stormclouds seemed to press, almost within the touch of a hand. Twilight was closing in, with a pitiless cold like icy spears driven sharply by a resistless wind.

Across the snow a sledge drawn by a stumbling horse was making pitiful progress toward the distant village whose lights should some time since have shone beaconlike on the horizon, but which somehow failed to appear.

To the travelers who urged their jaded beast forward it seemed at times as though the whole universe were comprised in a vast whirling wall of whiteness that circled about them like the sides of a huge maelstrom of which they were the center, wearying their straining eyes and dizzying [their tired brains.

In the wake of the sledge crept several shadowy forms. They did not decrease nor increase their distance from the sledge by so much as an inch, but hour after hour had followed silently with their long swinging gallop, as little to be shaken off as the man-eating shark that follows a vessel. As the darkness deepened the flash of a scarlet tongue or the glare of an eyeball, now green as an emerald, now red as the heart of a carbuncle, could be seen through the dusk.

For the hundredth time the woman turned and looked back apprehensively. "When it is quite dark they will attack," she whispered. The man made no answer. Instead, he leaned forward and lashed the panting horse. It tried to respond feebly, achieved a burst of speed, then faltered, stumbled and fell heavily.

In an instant the wolves were upon it. The man leaped from the sledge, dragged the woman to her feet, and holding her hand, they ran, ran blindly, fighting their way through the choking

swirl of the wall of snowflakes toward the spot where the village they sought should be, like shipwrecked swimmers fighting their way shoreward through the boiling surge of the sea.

For a while they ran in silence; then the woman slackened her pace a little and caught with both hands at her companion's arm for support.

"Not so fast," she pleaded. "My poor Ivan, you had better leave me. I cannot go much further. Leave me—you can save yourself."

"Nonsense!" he said, and he shook her with a roughness that was only anxiety and tenderness. "Did I plot and plan with you, work and starve with you, and bring you safely so far out of Siberia and along the road to freedom to leave you to the wolves now? Here, take this."

He forced his flask against her lips. There was only a swallow of brandy in it, and he obliged her to drain it to the last drop. Then throwing the flask from him to make his going lighter, he bent, and taking her in his arms, moved forward again silently saving all his breath for the task.

For a long time they went thus; then a shadowy gray form circled them in the gloom, snapped with bared, glistening teeth and disappeared. The woman shuddered and moaned, and the man, taking a deep breath, urged his frozen and failing limbs to greater activity. Soon two shadows kept pace with them, then three—and four. The red eyes glowed in the darkness, and presently emboldened, one of the creatures leaped, snapping viciously. Then the man spoke quickly, drawing his breath in long labored gasps.

"In a moment I will put you down," he said. "Then run—for God's sake, run! The village may be nearer than we know. You can do me no good. You may escape—you may see your son again. Think of that, not of me. I should die content if I thought you would see him again. You longed so!

"Now—run—run—oh, God—run!"

She saw a confused mass struggling upon the ground before her, and she ran

—ran screaming shrilly and terribly into the white smother that closed about her.

Eight days later, on a soft, showery April night in Paris, Paul Vedorowna sat at Madame de Tourville's dinner table, and across from him Jocelyn Carstairs smiled into his eyes. The girl was in Paris with an aunt, who at this moment watched her across the table anxiously, and inwardly anathematized her friend, Madame de Tourville, for throwing her so frequently with the young Slav, who, however famous as a writer and brilliantly fascinating as a man, had still nothing to offer a girl like Jocelyn Carstairs, save perhaps a great devotion.

None, however, realized this more keenly and bitterly than Vedorowna himself. His book, it is true, was about to appear, and he hoped great things of it. Real fame might accrue from it and much money, but these things did not seem enough to lay at Jocelyn Carstairs's feet. He worked demon-like in the cause of Poland, for then, indeed, in the uprising commanded by Vasatasi he might snatch a power and a place great enough to offer to this woman set as high as the stars above him.

Always, too, the thought of his mother was in his mind. At first he had thought to go to Siberia and rescue her by sheer plotting and good fortune. But the lack of money and means to carry out such a design deterred him. He would inevitably have been taken, and thus have done her no good. But with money and power in his grasp he knew that he could free her and endeavor to obliterate all the dreadful past; and already, as his ambition drew nearer to his hand, he began to count the days before he might at last aid her. As he turned at this moment to speak to his neighbor at the table, a servant approached him and presented a telegram on a salver. He took it up, and with an apology opened it. It was from his old grandfather, left desolate in the little village of Molv in Poland. It gave him directions to a monastery on the borders of Hungary.

"Your mother is there," it said.
"She is dying. Go to her; I cannot."

XIII

NIGHT had drawn her sable robes over the Hungarian mountains. From the west a great storm that for long had brooded, poised, as it were, on the horizon ready for an eagle's swoop, hurled its thunder crashing from crag to crag, and the lightning with giant hands tore apart the clouds to cast its broad, bluish glare over the rocky hillsides. To Vedorowna, drenched, bewildered and beaten by the deluge, the lights of the monastery that crowned the steep defile he followed seemed only to move backward as he advanced, so tortuous was the path that led to it.

He had raced across Europe with only the bit of paper containing the directions telegraphed by his grandfather to guide him, and now at last as he gained the summit and stood before the monastery door his heart was pounding and his lips were dry with apprehension and dread. To his summons came a brother with a young round face, who admitted him, and learning his name and errand, led him in and made him sit before the still warm embers of the refectory hearth. Then he went to apprise the Father Superior of this midnight guest.

The Father Superior was old, and he came very slowly, supported on either side by a stalwart brown-habited monk, his long staff tapping the stone floor, his gray beard and thatch of hair hanging wildly about his sunken face. But his eyes were not old, and to Paul Vedorowna, as he lay exhausted in his chair, it was as though they pierced him through and through. As he stood still for a moment in the doorway they seemed like the red embers of the fire upon the hearth.

For an instant there was silence in the room; then as Vedorowna rose to his feet, the old man spoke in a voice like the rattling of a dry wind in a hollow reed.

"You are almost too late," he

quavered, "almost too late. Hurry—hurry."

One of the monks turned to Vedorowna and in a low tone bade him follow. He led him through a low door, and down a long corridor where lay the room set apart for guests.

"It is against the rules for any woman to enter here," he said. "Yet this woman lay exhausted and dying at our very gates, so we took her in. You may enter."

He held open a door for Vedorowna as he spoke, watched him cross the threshold and then closed it softly behind him.

The room was as bare and simple as a cell. A lamp burned dimly, and on a narrow white bed a woman lay with closed eyes. But at Vedorowna's step they opened, and a smile of ineffable happiness fluttered for a moment across her pale mouth.

"Paul!" she whispered. "Paul!"

She tried to lift her hands toward him, but could not, as he threw himself beside her and raised her in his arms.

For a long moment they clung together, the man's vivid dark face pressed to the pale one that had once been so like it. Then the woman sighed and drooped.

"I was coming to find you," she whispered, "I—and another. We escaped from that awful place. Then he died, and I came on alone." She shuddered. "Sometimes the villagers gave me a sledge; sometimes I walked. Then a priest, who hated the government, paid my way out of the country under a false passport here to Austria, and directed me to some people who would help me. But I was ill; my money gave out again. I tried to walk the distance that remained. I fell in the road. And then I saw this place and crawled to the gates. The monks found me. They wrote a letter for me to Molv for you to come—" Her voice trailed off to a whisper, and she sank against him with closed eyes.

Vedorowna stooped and put his lips to her ear.

"Mother—tell me his name—the man who tried to ruin your youth, and

who sent you to Siberia in the end. Tell me his name."

The insistence of his plea called her back for a moment from the dark oblivion that was drawing her away. She shook her head with a faint movement.

"No—revenge is not good—and all your life would be ruined, too, if you harmed him. They would send you there—to Siberia."

With a remnant of strength she put her finger on her lips, and he knew that for his sake the portal through which he might mete out justice to this man who had so injured him and his was forever sealed.

A moment later she started up, clung to him with wild eyes, whispered of wolves and the night wind, and fell back upon her pillow dead.

The son knelt there for a long time beside her, looking upon her face, while outside the storm redoubled its fury and the hollow peals and reverberations of the thunder sounded like Titanic laughter among the hills.

XIV

THE Paul Vedorowna who returned to Paris and took up his life there once more was a different creature indeed from the man who had worked and played there a few months before with such a zestful purpose, such a wild sparkle of enjoyment. Now he played no more. His mother's death and this new high love which had set its seal so suddenly and so deeply upon his soul had killed all desire for the Bohemian ways and revels of those first months when for a brief interval Paris had intoxicated him.

Now, although death had removed one incentive to achievement, yet curiously enough love had at the same moment reprovided it. He had not done what he had intended. He had not won power nor fame nor money soon enough to rescue the woman who had suffered so much at the hands of an enemy, but he could still seek that enemy—still in spite of her dying pleas for his future

revel in the thought of revenge. And still he could dream of this new and different love, still work for it, plan and scheme—and hope.

From the disorder and the motley living of his existence hitherto, he seemed to have emerged, cleansed as by fire, into a clearer atmosphere. His former life had dropped from him, and a new gravity and steadfastness had taken its place.

Yet he expected little of his love, because he had given it to a woman set so high above him by birth and fortune that he dared expect nothing, dared ask for nothing. He meant to attain success at least, he told himself, before he spoke. Now it hurt his pride to have so little to offer, while the thought of Elise Villiers's eyes held him back intangibly, as though he must drive a knife into her heart to achieve his own happiness.

When he went to her on his return and told his story she listened with sympathy, but she received him very quietly. Although, remembering all her kindnesses, he endeavored that she should not perceive it, she yet was vibrantly aware of the change in him, and helplessly—as though she beat her hands upon a stone wall that was building day by day to entomb her living—she knew herself powerless now by any coquetry, any coldness or passion or plea whatsoever, to change him or win him to herself. His love had gone elsewhere irrevocably, and she knew it. His kindness remained—and choked her.

Yet, for a woman whom in many ways life had pampered and petted, she was in her relation to Vedorowna strangely humble. There was no anger in her mood now, no fierce resolves, only a great hopelessness and despair. There was no smallness, no hardness in her heart toward him. She had been capable of a great love.

Yet often when the theater lights were out and the tinsel stripped from her, she lay in her darkened room face downward and wept. The man threw himself heart and soul into his work. His book had been finished, accepted some

time since, and was now on the eve of its appearance. He wrote for various journals, and still continued his articles in the newspaper that had first employed him. He conferred with Vasatasi secretly and continually in the scant week that remained until the signal of revolt should be given. And often, for an hour or a moment, he was with Jocelyn Carrstairs or had a word or a smile from her that gilded the most disheartening day.

One morning, a day or so before that set for the tableaux in Madame de Tourville's house, he went out early into the Bois, because the morning was so clear and blue, and because his arms ached with emptiness and his heart with longing for the woman he loved, and he thought the fresh wind and the long green aisles of the forest might help him to forget for a little how far away she was from him even when he sat beside her and she smiled at him.

Out of the green stillness of the woodland about him crept the scent of moist wet leaves, and of apple and acacia blooms blown upon the soft May wind.

The tramp of horses behind him made him turn. Perhaps he knew that at this hour of the morning she sometimes rode there. Perhaps he had half hoped for a meeting. When he saw her face he knew that she was glad. He would not allow himself to read anything more into her glance as her eyes rested upon him.

A groom followed her, and for a little while Vedorowna walked slowly by her side with his hand on her horse's mane while he talked.

After a while she turned her head restlessly and looked back at the servant following her.

"Let him hold your horse, and walk a little way with me," Vedorowna pleaded with quick earnestness. "I am leaving Paris again in a few days—after these tableaux—and I shall not see you again—perhaps for a long time."

She gave him a startled look. "You are leaving Paris?"

Vedorowna saw that the rose flush went out of her cheeks for a moment, and her lashes went down to conceal the secrets of her eyes.

She called the groom, dismounted, left him in charge of the horses, and with Vedorowna at her side went down the deeply shaded footpath that lay upon their right. As they went, she struck nervously from time to time at the young leaves that brushed against her in passing, and the man saw that her hand shook a little. "Life is very hard for me now," he said at length abruptly in a low voice.

She turned and looked at him. "For you? Yet life has given you much."

His eyes held hers steadily. He refused to let his own heart snatch any sweet meaning from her words. "Life has given me nothing that I have the right to claim," he said. "I am bound by many things—and I am a poor man."

The girl threw up her head, and her lips curved. "As if that mattered. Do you wish for a rich man's friends?"

Vedorowna put out his hand and laid it strongly on hers. A vein beat in his temple and would not be stilled.

"I wish for only one thing in life," he said. "But I am like a laborer in some deep mine. I must finish my task before I can come up into the open spaces where the wind and the stars and youth—and love—dwell. You cannot understand. It all looks so simple to you."

"Tell me," he went on after a moment. "Suppose you loved a man who was winning fame of a sort, but who had set himself the task above all smaller achievements, to win a great political place and name—to dethrone a king perhaps, and share the power of a new republic or a new dynasty. And suppose this man—failed, and had only his smaller ambitions and successes to console him for his shattered dream of great wealth and great power that he had hoped to lay before you to win your tolerance of him. What would you do?"

She looked at him for a moment with a proud smile.

"What would I do? I would tell him that he insulted me when he thought to buy my love with great wealth or great name. I would tell him that I had known wealth and position all my

life and that they meant nothing to me. I would tell him that I was glad—*glad* that he had failed, for then he would believe in the reality of my love."

For a moment Vedorowna's soul was in his eyes as he looked at her; she saw it and was startled, and moved back with the quick instinct to avoid the very issue she craved. He saw that he would only wound her to take advantage at this moment of her admission. With a sigh he dropped her hand as they turned once more toward the waiting horses.

"You do not understand how a man feels about these things," he said. "You do not know."

As they arrived at the entrance to the bridle path, the groom led the horses toward her. Vedorowna in silence helped her to mount.

"Good-bye," she said softly, as she bent down to touch his hand. "Good-bye."

Their eyes met. They had no need of words, nor at that moment did they wish any.

In a moment Vedorowna stood alone watching her slight figure upon the big horse recede from him down the path through the forest. In his hand he held a little twig of young green that she had broken off, held for a moment and then dropped, and half unconsciously he raised it to his lips.

XV

"THE equality of man is a vision—the dream of the altruist and the nightmare of the Nihilist."

Paul Vedorowna turned in his chair and looked at the speaker. "Nihilism seems an incredible thing until a man—or a woman—has rotted in Siberia," he said in a low, clear voice. "Then they strike blindly like wild animals, without logic or reason."

"If they would only strike with their pens and use their inkwells for bombs as you do, Vedorowna, they would arrive sooner," said the other good-naturedly.

From the head of her table Madame de Tourville leaned forward, wineglass in hand.

"A toast to the new book," she said, "that is taking all literary and artistic Paris by storm. You are just entering on a great literary and political career. Are you not very proud?"

But in the midst of the general acclamation Vedorowna had eyes only for Jocelyn Carstairs, who sat across from him. And she on this evening under the stimulus of his presence, his look, had become like an alabaster cup that a master's hand fills slowly with purple wine. All rose bright she seemed in this hour of unconscious flowering, as though her heart, like a flame leaping up, had tinged her transparent flesh with a fluctuant glow. And of a surety the red blood showed like wine in her fine fingers, her thin nostrils, her small ears, beat in her throat, and lay as though fresh spilled upon her mouth. In her white gown, with pearls about her throat, she was a perfect expression of innocent and exquisite youth.

It was the night of Madame de Tourville's long expected tableaux, the night upon which La Prevosa was to dance as Judith, and in this gay dinner party before the evening's entertainment there seemed to be a strange electric current, a subconscious sense among the guests of the possibilities of life—much as one has at the theater on the rising of the curtain upon a second act which the first has expectantly foreshadowed.

In the massive dining room the table was banked with scarlet geraniums and had tall white candles burning under scarlet shades. The tapestries were old tones of pinks and purples, and at one side a marble nymph on her bronze pedestal held aloft a rosy torch.

"Men will always rise—and sink," said the first speaker, when the toast had been drunk. "The altruist's dream would mean stagnation—the Nihilist's pandemonium."

Vedorowna leaned forward trying to smile. The love he craved was far off from him, and, if for no other reason, debarred by his own sense of loyalty to Elise Villiers. In the midst of the brilliancy and the badinage about him his soul was sick with longing and with the nervous anxiety and tension consequent

upon the movements of Vasatasi, who sat near him, to all appearances cool and unpreoccupied.

But then it was not Vasatasi who would have to pay the penalties of discovery.

Vedorowna addressed his hostess with a gleam of humor as she set down her glass. "It is very gracious of you not to be horrified at my socialistic tendencies," he said. "I know that you fine flowers of aristocracy consider the equality of man a synonym for chaos. Yet I consider a sovereign-ruled nation imbued with the socialistic spirit like a poor man with good expectations."

Vasatasi looked up quickly. "The road to beggary," he said softly, "is paved with good expectations."

This was the kind of conservative speech that Vasatasi enjoyed. No one suspected him of being other than a most devoted adherent of his royal master, and he played the role to perfection. But he liked for the moment behind his royalist mask to remind Vedorowna thus covertly that he held him in his power and could ruin him if he chose. On the other side of the table, a foamy young matron, Lucille d'Alma, wearying of the conversation, broke into it unceremoniously. The lady had married a French marquis, and—as she would plaintively observe—lost him in the second year of her marriage.

The mislaying of D'Alma, however, had given her all the character and prerogatives of widowhood, though without its privilege of remarriage. For his taking-off had not been by death, but by a golden-haired warbler at the Folies Bergères. Madame d'Alma had the sympathy of society, and when the Marquis, fleeing from his sprightly shepherdess and her shears, had gone to explore in darkest Africa, his wife had taken a house in Paris and proceeded to enjoy herself.

She was dark, petite, amazingly well dressed. She had that combination of flattery and impudence which in a clever woman spells social success.

"He is a brewer," she was explaining across the table. "He expected me to get him cards for a ball he was mad to

say he'd been to. He is disgustingly rich, so I intimated that he might let me have five hundred pounds for my pet charity. And the brute—who already had the cards—refused."

Madame de Tourville laughed softly. "If money talks," she said, "his must have an impediment of speech."

"But that wasn't the worst," Madame d'Alma went on petulantly, absorbed in her own woes. "I had him to tea before I found out that he wouldn't contribute to charity, and Lady Allensmere, who had been yachting, mentioned the Dardanelles and asked him if he'd seen them. The creature fairly beamed at her and said he hadn't met them yet, but expected to at the Newcastle ball."

Everybody laughed, and Madame de Tourville took up the corsage bouquet of white roses and violets by her plate and began to fasten it among the laces of her gown.

"My dear, I am afraid I am obliged to agree with you," she said, "that a knowledge of the world and a charming manner have a price above rubies."

"They can cover a multitude of worldly indiscretions," said Madame d'Alma tartly. "Obtuseness should positively be classed with immorality. At any rate, my tactless and opulent—and also corpulent—brewer fared badly at his ball, and I had my revenge, for he got frightfully snubbed. I managed not to see him all the evening, and I think toward the end he would have given twice five hundred pounds and have endowed a dozen hospitals for a single introduction. There being no beer, he resorted to cocktails to console himself. When I left his irritation at the snubs had put a fine edge upon his temper, and the cocktails had left it jagged."

Jocelyn Carstairs laughed outright. "I hope he learned," she said lazily, "that, after all, society is very much like trade. You need capital for both, and neither one gives you something for nothing. If you haven't money you must have brains or good looks or—audacity."

"Or ancestors," said Madame de Tourville as she rose from the table.

Jocelyn Carstairs went away by herself onto the garden terrace, where high walls shut out the city of Paris and its myriad lights, and the night was still and silvery with the vast array of its unclouded stars. She loved the night and the solitude with the intensity of a nature which had deep within it certain qualities which were akin to them.

When a soft step sounded on the terrace after a while and a hand touched hers for an instant, she scarcely moved. The touch of that hand, which had thrilled the soul of another woman, thrilled hers now with a strange sweet-ness and also a strange desire to cover her face and weep. Destiny was in that touch—and life, and in the lack of it—death itself.

Vedorowna saw her emotion as he bent to look into her eyes. "I wish to make your visit here in Paris something that you will remember with happiness," he said a little abruptly. "Nothing must mar it; everything must contribute to it. What do you like best?" The girl turned her head and looked at him with a little smile, half doubtful and half gay.

"Life," she answered unexpectedly.

Vedorowna was silent for a moment, struck with her response. Could there be human beings in the world to whom life was not a morass—whose crown of victory was death—a sorry masquerade of ribald jesters? To this girl life seemed a sunlit road through fields of primrose and of daffodil. Even in a dark and narrow way, he thought, she held in her heart a light to lead her steps, and suddenly his fevered and restless soul longed fiercely to follow in that path of the morning where Jocelyn Carstairs's feet were set, and which led so far away from the night wherein he moved.

He was about to speak when she straightened herself and turned away from him with the quick instinct of some startled sylvan thing. Dreams for the moment seemed to her enough—she did not desire speech. But Vedorowna, with his subtle intuitions, responded to her mood in a flash.

He followed her and drew her hand through his arm.

"Let us walk up and down for a few minutes," he said in a matter-of-fact tone. "I love this stillness, this peace, after the stifling places I have known. Let us steal half an hour before we go on drawing-room duty again."

Reassured, she yielded, and as they walked she questioned him about his former life, and insensibly he began to speak.

Of necessity his speech was guarded, for he never for an instant forgot the need of caution in talking of himself. But even within the limits of the horizon which bound him, his words glowed with a magnetism that drew his hearer far from the realities of her existence. For the moment through the veil of guarded words he spoke to her not as the Anglo-Saxon speaks, but as the Latin, the Oriental or the Slav will speak to the woman who has stirred his heart—in words that are perfume and music and flame.

A strange pulse of mystery and of intangible romance seemed to throb in his voice, in the touch of his hand upon hers. Although he spoke of far different scenes, she seemed to see strange Eastern cities rearing jeweled minarets against skies of gold and jade and blue. She saw the desert sands under a sun of brass and the waters of age old countries, black and sullen beneath the copper shield of the low hung moon.

In his voice, in his very presence, was the mystery of peoples whose philosophy of life was old when the monuments to it they have left were still under the sculptor's hand. She heard the intonations of unknown tongues, the beat of strange folk songs and songs of love, and caught the gleam of eyes that seemed born with a knowledge which the young, virile race of which she was a part grew old without learning. And in her heart and her senses the lotus and the poppy seemed to have flowered with his touch.

As they turned to go back to the drawing-room, Vedorowna paused for a moment, held the girl back, and with deliberation, with a sort of passionate

renunciation, kissed the hands she silently yielded him.

Neither of them knew that Elise Villiers, standing for a moment near the long window, had seen—and at last definitely understood.

XVI

As the silken curtain which had disclosed Jocelyn Carstairs posed as Prosperine fell, shutting the breathless tinted figure from view, Vedorowna rose from his place and went quietly in search of Elise Villiers. He found her standing in a small dressing room behind the stage that filled one end of the ballroom. Beside her Vasatasi was listening to some last instructions as to his movements in the dance. In her hand the dancer held the imitation dagger set with paste jewels which she intended to use.

Vedorowna, entering quietly, was at her side and had spoken before she was aware of his presence.

"I want you to use this," he said. He drew from its sheath the glittering dagger that Elise Villiers once had coveted and held it out to her. "I can offer you no more precious thing to add to the success of your dance. I know how much you wanted to use it—and that you only relinquished the idea because of some sentiment of aversion you thought I had."

La Prevosa turned quickly, placing herself between the two men with her lithe, flashing movement. Her hand was outstretched to take the weapon and hide it in her dress. But she was too late. Vasatasi's alert eye had seen the dagger and noted her effort at concealment. With a quiet step he was at her side.

"The device engraved on that hilt plate has a familiar look," he said softly, and turned to Vedorowna. "Is it possible that the weapon belongs to you—bearing my crown?"

Vedorowna raised his head abruptly and looked long into the sneering eyes so near his own, and as he looked, comprehension leaped like a flash of light into his glance.

"Did you ever by chance know a woman named Olga Petrovitch?" he questioned in his turn.

Vasatasi shrugged deliberately. "Yes, I knew her—well. She was, in fact—"

He never uttered the word, for Vedorowna's open hand shot out, and dashed it from his lips.

"I am the son of the man whom you knew as Ivan Salski," he said—"the man you hounded to his death! I am the son of Olga Petrovitch, and I shall finish my father's uncompleted work!"

He was breathless and burning. Over his stormy brows his dark hair had fallen in disorder. His hands shook, but his lips and jaw had hardened to iron.

Vasatasi had stepped back and drawn his handkerchief across his lips. "Was Ivan Salski your father?" he said softly, meaningly, and his words cut deeper than any answering blow. "I thought for a moment that you were about to claim me as your long lost parent. I shall fight you, *mon ami*—be sure of that, because now that you hate me you know too much for us both to live. I shall fight you—but it shall be through the Third Section, through Siberia and the knout. After all, you are a used tool. It is better that your 'mouth be stopped with dust.'" He made the quotation lightly. "I will never do you the honor to meet you. Make the most of the hour that still remains to you. Russia has many underground methods of bringing her enemies to justice, and it is quite likely that you may find the climate even of Paris unhealthy."

Vedorowna was for a moment silent. He knew that he was ruined. He knew that from this moment his life would not be worth a moment's purchase. Let only Vasatasi leave that house tonight, communicate with any of his agents or the Russian police, and he, Vedorowna, would be already as good as dead—socially, politically and in time actually by some stealthy hand in the dark.

But beside him the woman who loved him, crouching back until now, her hands pressed to her beating throat,

stirred—vibrated into pulsating life and movement.

She, however innocently, had brought the man she loved into contact with Vasatasi and into this danger. Now she must pay the price of his freedom and his life.

As she started forward, the door at the further end of the room opened and Madame de Tourville, a jarring note in her rose-colored gown and pleased complacency, entered hastily.

"You look like a group of conspirators," she said gaily. "Do you know the curtain rises in fifteen minutes? Vasatasi, I believe you are trying to escape me yet and spoil my novelty. Come—I want to see you make your entrance."

She laid her hand upon his arm, and with a nod to the others and an admonition to hurry, drew him away.

But to Paul Vedorowna, as he felt the arms of the woman who loved him close despairingly about him, it seemed that the bitterness of life was too great to be borne.

In the stillness he heard afar off a deep-toned church bell ringing in the night, and as though the little voices of men merged into one mighty voice of pain cried aloud to their immutable Deity, it seemed to his fevered imagination to cry over the whole city in a voice of thunder: "Allah! Allah!—God! God! God!"

XVII

WHEN the curtain rose a few minutes later on the great ballroom packed to its doors, and upon a stage curiously set for the Dance of Death, it rose also upon the ultimate expression of the genius of a great artist.

La Prevosa had been the greatest dancer in Europe, but in this thing which she had conceived and made to live as a great human drama she had at once renewed her fame and eclipsed it.

For the unities of her conception she had taken some liberties with history, but these discrepancies were wholly submerged in the palpitating realities of the dance, which at its inception was

a series of poses in the Eastern fashion, culminating in a movement so passionate and so vivid that it was like the wind-blown dance of a slender flame magically endowed with the evanescent form of woman. The whole pantomime was designed to represent Judith as she robed herself before the slaying of Holofernes—"laying off her widow's garb and putting on all her braveries."

The curtain rose on the interior of a tent pitched upon the outskirts of the Assyrian camp. In the room the attention to detail was both minute and magnificent—displayed in the superb tapestries and skins upon the wall, the cushions stiff with gold and colored embroideries, the lamps of bronze and silver, the Eastern rugs piled one upon the other on the floor.

The dancer herself lay upon a couch of striped and tawny skins, her lithe limbs enveloped in a mist of black, which defined the slim ivory lines of her arms and throat and threw shadows upon the somber-lipped and tragic-eyed face about which it was wrapped.

The music swelled with a martial strain, what was distant and then nearer, as though it came from the Assyrian camp without—the sinister throb of a drum, the insistent clash of cymbals, the liquid honey of a gold-stringed harp, then the steady throb of a drum once more.

The dancer stirred, undulated like a cobra and sat up, throwing back the sable folds from about her head. A moment she dwelt brooding, then with a swift sharp movement she drew a dagger from her bosom and held it high above her, fastening her fascinated gaze upon it.

In the light it was seen to gleam with darting fires of emerald and ruby and frost white light, that seemed to drip from its keen polished blade.

At the instant, the distant music rose on a wild and piercing note, and with a gesture as free and savage as that of a thing of the woods, she sprang to her feet at a bound, and with the weapon upheld above her fierce lifted face began a slow movement full of the posturings

of the East, in which her slim body seemed to undulate and then actually to expand with inward fury and dark determination. Then with the recurrent crash, faint, sudden and heart stirring, of the cymbals, she had thrown the dagger to the floor, and with frenzied hands begun to tear the black draperies from her body. At that moment she was a thrilling, tragic incarnation of revenge, of murder. Yet wonderfully through this began to shine voluptuously forth a mounting spirit of seduction—an evil honeyed something in which was divined the thought: "I must put on all my braveries—be fair to see."

The tearing hands went more slowly; she looked down at herself and her teeth gleamed; she lifted her arms again slowly and stepped forth in a clinging garment of sheer white bordered with silver threads. Then with eagerness she drew forth from a great chest a robe of golden tissue sewn with rubies, let down the long plaits of her hair, wound rubies and topazes about her throat, put jeweled anklets above her slim sandaled feet and carmine upon her mouth. Then, catching the dagger from the floor, she raised it to arm's length, put it to her lips and kissed it, and hid it in her bosom.

At the back of the tent a curtain was thrust aside, and a slave with mute gestures indicated the approach of Holofernes, and prostrated herself as he appeared upon the threshold.

It was Vasatasi, who under the eye of Madame de Tourville had as yet been able to make no single move against Paul Vedorowna.

The dancer stiffened as he appeared, threw back her head like a serpent about to strike, then with humility bent be-

fore him, kissed his hands and led him to a couch, placing wine before him. Her movements were wonderfully silken. She leaned toward him. Her mouth invited; her whole body was a caress. Then slowly she stood up and raised her hands above her head. Not a note of suggestion, yet her whole being an invitation, a promise, that with that hidden dagger was awful to look upon.

The conqueror made a gesture of pleasure as though assenting that she should dance before him—and on the instant she began to sway in the evil beauty of the Dance of Death.

Backward and forward like a golden queen spider weaving its silken web—a whirl of amber gauze, of rose red jewels, of enticing arms and flashing slim white ankles. Slowly at first, languidly, then faster and faster, nearer and nearer, her narrowed eyes fixed on the breathless entranced face of the man before her. Her finger tips touched him and were snatched back; her arms wreathed him and were gone. Then a floating nearer and yet nearer—a shrill cry of mingled passion and triumph—the dagger flashed above his heart and descended swiftly.

When those about the stage reached her she was standing quite still, her arms hanging idly at her sides and her gaze fixed upon the body of Vasatasi, in whose heart the crested dagger still quivered.

For a long moment she looked Vedorowna in the eyes; and although her face was drawn and shadowed with the approaching darkness of eternal night, her own eyes were like stars.

Then very swiftly she laid her finger on her lips for a moment and turned away with a gesture of surrender.



MANY present problems are past follies getting ripe.

FORCE MAJEURE

By VAN TASSEL SUTPHEN

FULKE STAYNER'S black eyebrows drew ominously level.
"That means you refuse?" he said.

Katharine Garth sat serene and unshaken. "I appreciate the honor," she answered, "but of course that's not enough. I'd have to care, really care."

"And you don't?"
"Not in that way."
"But you will—some day."
"I think not."
"I say you *will*."
"No."

Stayner rose and stood looking down upon her, the fine figure of a man in his wrath, as the feminine in Katharine Garth could not but confess. At the same time her temper was rising to match his own; this was plain bullying, and she would resist it to the last extremity.

"You are going to marry me," he declared. "Understand, that is settled."

"Don't be absurd."
"I'm not." He laughed shortly. "It's only that you don't know me, Katharine. I get what I want—always."

"You are fortunate."

"Bah! That's only what a fool would call it. I take my own where I find it because of the strength that is in me. Brute strength—oh, I don't care what name you give it, so long as it wins. Most men have to trim their sails—that's one way. But it's not mine."

"I've gone ahead, Katharine, and steadily, too, never turning to the one side nor the other. You've seen that for yourself, haven't you? You can't

deny it. Simply a question of making up my mind as to what I want and then getting it. So far I have succeeded—that's a matter of record. Now I want you, and I'm willing to admit that you are the biggest thing yet to come into my life. But that doesn't bother me; it's merely a question of comparative values. I want you, and I'm going to have you; is that clear?"

"Perhaps it is fortunate for me that we are not living in the primitive age of the world," retorted Miss Garth. "Otherwise I might expect to be knocked on the head and carried off to your cave."

"And why not so today, if all other ways fail?"

Half a block away one could hear the *teuf-teuf* of the motors on Fifth Avenue; through the lace curtains at the window could be distinguished the silhouette of a policeman on his beat; from an adjoining room came the scent of her father's cigar, and the rustle of the *Evening Post*—all these familiar things within arm's length. And yet for the moment the woman heart in her trembled, and her eyes wandered. Oh, it was a cowardly thing to do, but the electric call button lay under her hand; she pressed it, and a man servant entered with the tea service.

Fulke Stayner's eyes were dancing as he handed across a plate of sugar wafers. "You see it was dead earnest," he said audaciously. "One lump, please."

Miss Garth stiffened into speechless indignation.

"Now you're angry because I have made you afraid," persisted this impossible man. "But I can't apologize, for

I did it intentionally. It was the only way."

An acute realization of the ridiculous in the situation transferred the tension, and Katharine Garth dissolved into a tumult of laughter. "What am I to do with you?" she demanded.

"Marry me."

"But I can't—I mean I won't."

"Then it's to be the Sabine formula after all."

"Not another word of that nonsense, Ffulke Stayner. Will you have another cup of tea?"

"No thank you. I have an engagement uptown." He rose and pulled on his gloves. "Remember that I've given you reasonable warning," he concluded. "You see I do want you very much." Incontinently she softened as she looked at him, for no woman can remain altogether insensible to the ring of truth in a man's voice when it is a question of the greatest thing in all the world. Yet she knew that she owed it equally to him and to herself that her response should be definite and unmistakable. "I wish that I could," she said softly. "Good-bye."

Ffulke Stayner's car swung into the straight and pulled up sharply. "Going my way?" he called, and Miss Garth smiled back in friendly fashion; it had been a month since she had seen him, or, indeed, anyone of her nearer acquaintances. This was her annual duty visit to Cousin Amelia Tyler, and existence in rural Virginia is not apt to be exciting after frost has put an end to the hunting. In truth she was delighted to see a familiar face, but, being a woman, she temporized. "I'm out for my regular constitutional," she explained. "I do twelve miles a day, rain or shine, and scorn the motor and all its works. And pray what are you doing in these sober latitudes?"

"Have a shooting box over there," and his gloved hand indicated a vague section of the horizon. "Just a bachelor's shack—do my own bacon and flapjacks, you know. Back to nature—the verb 'to sprawl' in all its moods and

tenses. I have to conjugate it once in so often."

"I'll let you take me back to Edgewood," concluded Miss Garth. She mounted into the car beside him; he tucked the robes about her, and they were off, the bare, brown fields gliding swiftly by, and the keen November air blowing in their faces. "I can't understand any man owning a car like this and not wanting to drive himself," she commented rapturously. "Fancy being hauled about by a hired man like a sack of potatoes going to market, and calling that motoring. This is a man's sport."

"Glad you like it," returned Stayner a trifle absently. Then, with a swift, sidelong glance: "I wonder if you realize how you look to me tonight? Yes that's the word—tempting."

"Now don't spoil it all," said Miss Garth, frowning ever so slightly. Silence fell between them.

The car sped on, and suddenly Katharine Garth uttered an exclamation. "We surely ought to be near Edgewood by this time!" She bent forward to read a signpost that flashed by. "Why—why," she stammered, "that was the road to Chatham Corners!"

Mr. Stayner deliberately pressed down on the accelerator, and the car bounded away at an increased speed.

"I shall be late if we keep on in this direction any longer," continued Miss Garth. "Please turn around."

The man deigned no reply, and Katharine's anger rose. "Surely you heard what I said!" she demanded.

"I did."

"You are taking me straight away from Edgewood, instead of toward it."

"I quite understand that."

"But—but—" Words failed her, and she bit hard upon a chagrined lip.

"See here, Katharine," said Stayner, "you may as well understand the situation. I'm running away with you—just as I promised to do."

"It's a poor jest—I don't like it."

"Jest! It's the cold, hard truth."

"Please!"

"Oh, I mean it. I've got you now, and I intend to keep you." There was

an iron hard note in his voice that carried conviction—a conviction of the incredible. The car sped on.

"Ffulke!" She had forced herself to speak, and the word was hardly more than a whisper above the noise of the machinery. Yet he turned instantly.

"What is it?"

"Will you take me home?"

"No."

Insulted womanhood flamed forth at him. "Coward!"

Ffulke Stayner smiled and took a fresh grip of the steering wheel.

"I won't—I won't! Don't touch me!"

His free arm went firmly around her waist. "You are not going to jump," he said, and she yielded perforce to the mastership in his voice.

"Now you are sensible again," he continued, and took his arm away. The girl sat bolt upright in her seat and stared straight ahead.

It was a lonely country road, and there was not a human being in sight. Even if they did chance to meet a passing vehicle, what was there for her to say or do? At thirty-five miles an hour explanations and appeals would be equally futile. And yet the edge of the world lay very near—perhaps at the next turning.

The dusk was coming on, and in the distance could be discerned the straggling lights of the village. Halfway down the long main street Stayner shut off power and put on the brakes.

"I know the parson here," he began, and stopped; even his hardihood quailed before her look.

"I meant it honestly," he growled. "You could send the certificate back to Cousin Amelia by post and head off all the gossip."

"I don't believe in being married outside of one's own parish church," replied Miss Garth, calmly argumentative.

"But, my dear child—"

"There's somebody coming. Hadn't you better drive on?"

The car resumed its progress, and Miss Garth continued to busy herself with her own thoughts, albeit she

found them curiously inconsecutive and confused. Where was this shooting box of which he had spoken? Probably some miles further on, and the road was growing rougher, forcing a perceptible diminution in the speed of the car. Of course something ought to be done, and she speculated vaguely upon the possible openings for independent action. Failing to settle upon anything feasible, her mind began to dwell upon certain side issues of this extraordinary affair; she even caught herself wondering if they would have hot beaten biscuits for supper at Edgewood that night. Ridiculous, of course—they always had them. Also honey. Miss Garth felt a wave of self-pity sweeping over her; she was more than likely to lose her share of these delicacies; really it was too bad of Ffulke Stayner. It was almost dark now, and she was shaking with cold and hunger and fatigue. What an absurd world this was in which material things seemed to matter so much!

The car jolted over a railway track and stopped. Mr. Stayner uttered an impatient ejaculation and fiddled ineffectively with levers and controls. The car coughed once or twice, moved forward indecisively and stopped again finally.

"It's that miserable carburetor!" declared Mr. Stayner gloomily. He removed the engine bonnet and busied himself with the manifold adjustments. Miss Garth accorded critical attention, but remained a strictly impartial spectator.

"No use," was the reluctant decision. Mr. Stayner consulted his watch, and then replaced the bonnet with methodical haste. "We're right by a station," he exclaimed, "and the southbound 'mixed' is just about due. We can take it as far as Dunham, get a buckboard there and drive over. Sorry to give you so much inconvenience, Katharine, but it can't be helped. Would you mind passing me the end of that strap?"

"You take so much for granted," commented Miss Garth. "It's quite too—well, 'amazing' is the only word that seems to fit." Yet she complied

with his request, and a few moments later they walked together to the station engaged in what might easily have passed for ordinary and even amicable converse.

"I may as well tell you now that I don't intend to go on board that train," began Miss Garth tentatively.

"Please to consider one or two incontrovertible facts," retorted Stayner. "In the first place, the only person at the station is Sanderson, the agent, and a five-dollar bill will make him instantly blind and deaf to everything outside of his official duties. Secondly, the passengers on the train will be made up of a few farmers coming down from Lynn; and in this country it is not considered good form for strangers to interfere in a purely family difference. Husband and wife are expected to settle their own affairs, and even if I am obliged to carry you into the car the affair would be nothing more than a spectacle. You wouldn't care for that, would you now?"

"It does look like checkmate," acknowledged Miss Garth, with a coolness surprising even to herself. "Of course you realize that there will always be a part of me that you can't capture, that you can never hold."

Ffulke Stayner favored a stray pine-knot with a resentful kick. "I do know that," he admitted. "And I don't like it. But it's something to have you, if only in the one way. I'll make the best of it."

Miss Garth regarded her companion with a contemplative eye. "It would be charitable to conclude that you are not in your right mind," she said at length. "But I don't suppose you want the benefit of the doubt."

"Thanks, no. I know exactly what I am doing, and how preposterous the whole business must appear to the unprejudiced eye. But now that I'm in it I shall see it through. Hullo, here's the train!"

The southbound "mixed," composed of several freights and flats, and one combination baggage, smoking and day car, clanked into the station. The engine was to take water, and there was

no hurry. Through the dimly lighted windows of the passenger car might be discerned half a dozen black slouch hats, disposed at a somnolent angle. "Not encouraging," thought Miss Garth.

"Now, if you are ready," said Stayner, and Katharine, for the simple reason that there was nothing else to do, preceded him into the car.

"Why, Katharine Garth!"

Miss Garth turned quickly; under the light of the smoky oil lamp she recognized in the white-haired lady her cousin's dearest friend, Mrs. Harrison, of Allerton. Their hands met cordially.

"It's the best of luck to run across you," declared Miss Garth. "You see, I was out motoring with Mr. Stayner, and we had a breakdown. Could you take me on to Allerton and give me a bed for tonight? I can telephone Cousin Amelia from your house."

Mrs. Harrison expressed delighted acquiescence. The significant fact that Miss Garth, in company with a young man, had boarded a train heading directly away from Lynn and Edgewood did not seem to impress her. She insisted that Ffulke Stayner should be presented to her, and hospitably included him in the invitation. "If you don't mind an attic room, Mr. Stayner, I think we can make you decently comfortable."

But Mr. Stayner declined. "I really ought to stay by the car," he explained. "If I can get it into shape," he continued, "I may run down in the morning and take you back to Edgewood, Katharine. But don't count on me; of course you have the train."

"Yes," assented Miss Garth. She felt a little dazed and spoke mechanically. The engine bell rang.

"Good night, then." Mr. Stayner lifted his hat and departed. "A most agreeable young man," commented Mrs. Harrison, nodding her head vigorously. The train groaned, grunted and started forward.

Mrs. Harrison was full of an all-engrossing topic, the election of a coadjutor bishop for the diocese. "Just to think, my dear, fifty-seven ballots and nothing like a choice in sight! I don't

trust the High Church party—never could and never will.” Katharine listened, and whenever that irrational impulse obsessed her to fling hysterical irrelevancies into the discussion there was always the hard, friendly seat rail to clutch with might and main. The train rumbled on toward Allerton and oblivion.

February, and Katharine was still at Edgewood, although the situation was not of her own choosing. But Cousin Amelia had been desperately ill with pneumonia, and desertion would have been heathenish. So she had stayed on, inwardly protesting, ever nervously alive to the contingency of a new attack, perhaps a repetition of the old one. Of course she *knew* that her fears were groundless. It was reasonably certain that Ffulke Stayner had gone back to New York; she had even noticed his name among the “also presents” at various social functions. Moreover, only a veritable madman would readventure action so outrageous, and Ffulke Stayner was as sane as anybody. All this she told herself again and again, and yet she continued to be afraid, irrationally but horribly afraid. She never went alone into the village; it was only in broad daylight that she dared to take a walk in the park about the house. Ridiculous as it may appear to the normal mind, the thought of seeking protection never seriously occurred to her. Who would believe a story so preposterous? She would only be bringing on herself the suspicion of a disordered imagination. And there was her maidenly pride to be considered; the mere thought of such a revelation brought the hot blushes to her cheek. “I dare say he counted upon that,” she reflected bitterly. “It’s my one consolation that I know what I think of him now; I can heartily and honestly hate Ffulke Stayner to the end of my days.” Having arrived at this conclusion, Miss Garth took much apparent self-satisfaction in repeating the sentiment at frequent intervals. But down in the deep of her heart she was conscious of only one real emotion toward the

villain of her melodrama, and that was plain fear. In some fashion or other the struggle was bound to renew itself, and then—and then—

However, time is a wondrous resolver of mundane difficulties, and as the weeks wore on she grew more confident, even measurably at ease. Assuredly Ffulke Stayner, for all of his bull-necked obstinacy, possessed intelligence, and sober reflection must convince him that his cause was hopeless. She remembered his look when she told him there would be always a part of her that not even *force majeure* could conquer. And that the most important part. He could feel then the sting of such a thought, and there was a curious satisfaction in her knowing it. After all, they had been good friends up to the one impassable gulf. Yes, there was hope even for Ffulke Stayner, and Katharine Garth was glad of it, as a Christian maid should be. In the meantime he was leaving her alone, and she was glad of that, too—unspeakably so.

At the Christmastide there came to her through a New York florist an immense bunch of Russian violets. No card was enclosed, but it was not difficult to identify the mute appeal. Such a gift could be neither refused nor acknowledged, and at first the reflection nettled her. But she could not visit her wrath on the innocent flowers, so she put them in water and told herself that she had forgiven Ffulke Stayner. The decision brought its own reward, for she was no longer afraid of him. The spiritual forces had conquered, as inevitably they must.

Cousin Amelia was really convalescent, and it had been settled that Katharine should return to New York on the first of the week. This particular Friday afternoon was dull and chill, but she had been cooped up in the house for full three days and she must have air and exercise. So she started out for a walk in the park, and once at the gate, the daring resolve came to her to go further afield. The exhilarating sense of freedom so near at hand went to

her head; she lifted the latch of the small foot wicket and stepped into the open. A midwinter thaw had left the fields brown and bare, and after a moment's consideration she decided to strike for the forest uplands that lay to the west of Edgewood. It was good to be out of doors again, and Katharine walked at top speed for the best part of an hour; now she was in a region unfenced and primeval, inhabited sparsely by charcoal burners and wood cutters. There was no human being within sight or hearing, only audacious "cotton-tails" peering out at her from the shelter of the blueberry patches and innumerable squirrels chattering unintelligible insult. "They're quite aware that none of the dogs are with me," thought the girl. "Why didn't I bring Nip and Tuck?" Then as the long shadow of a man projected itself over her shoulder she turned and saw Ffulke Stayner. "Oh, it's you," she said slowly, and wondered if there were any other available words in the English language.

"None else," returned Stayner easily, "and thanks for the chance you've given me—at last. I've been waiting for it."

"I thought you were in New York."

"Not I. Except twice for half a day, when I knew you were not likely to leave Edgewood."

Tears of indignation filled the girl's eyes. "Then you have never ceased to keep me under espionage," she fulminated. "And you seize the first advantage."

"Precisely. I was beaten, soundly beaten, in the preliminary skirmish, but I have lived to fight another day. Please to understand"—the man's voice grew arrogant—"that my watch has been a good one. I don't think you have once crossed the threshold at Edgewood without my knowing it. I possess an excellent pair of field glasses, and there wasn't much else to do in the picturesque but rather dull town of Lynn."

"Well?"

"You are going to marry me. Fix the date to suit yourself."

"No."

"Final and absolute?"

"Mr. Stayner, it is impossible for me to continue this discussion. Will you be good enough to let me pass?"

"By all the gods, I will not, Katharine Garth!" He was smiling still, but the level line of the black eyebrows persisted. Miss Garth looked away and was silent.

"Women are the most unreasonable of created beings," complained Mr. Stayner after the pause had endured some five seconds. "They are told that a thing has got to be; they can even see it with their own eyes; and yet they continue to jibe and balk, like a green hunter at his first Liverpool jump. It's enough to upset even a sensible man, something that I never pretended to be."

"Just what do you propose—if it isn't too much to ask?"

"I have the car at the nearest point in the road—about a mile from here. We can be married at Lynn, catch the night train north, and after that as you will—the Mediterranean, Palm Beach, Egypt. Heaven is everywhere, they say."

"And so is the other place," retorted Miss Garth pointedly.

"I know it; haven't I been living there for the last three months? You can't scare me with bogeys, Katharine. Not after seeing the real thing."

"I suppose there is nothing I can say to you." The sentence ended with a sigh.

"But there is. One small word of three letters, and then we could go along comfortably to some warmer place than this extremely windy hillside. Hullo, it's beginning to snow! I say, but it is coming down!"

The storm had crept upon them entirely unobserved, and with an astonishing celerity. Already the air was obscured with the whirling particles of snow, so fine and small that it stung like needle points. And the wind was blowing a gale.

"Come on," said Stayner in a changed voice. "I don't like the looks of this." He took Katharine by the arm and

urged her forward. "It's thicker and thicker," he commented. "And growing no end cold. Let me tie this scarf over your hat. That's better. On we go."

Five minutes later they halted, breathing hard and well-nigh exhausted. The landscape had entirely disappeared, for the wind, catching up the feathery snow, drove it in all directions and so doubled its powers of observation.

"We'll have to find cover within a mighty short time," said Stayner. "I remember passing a cabin on the way up, and it can't be far away. Suppose that I try a cast to the right. Don't move from where you are." He plunged off, slipping and floundering on the uncertain footing. Katharine watched him out of sight; then she ran with all her might in the opposite direction. She sank down on a fallen log and waited.

Stayner was shouting out her name; now his voice was close at hand and she trembled; again, and it sounded indistinct and far away. Now the silence remained unbroken.

Katharine found her feet and considered her position. Her anger was still hot within her, and anything was preferable to the enforced companionship from which she had just escaped. How dared he—how dared he? Every drop of blood in her body tingled its just resentment.

If anything, the storm was increasing in severity, but it did not occur to her to be afraid. She had only to keep on down hill and she must certainly reach the road and safety. She started confidently enough, but her skirts impeded her steps and progress was slow.

A hundred yards further and she stopped, breathless, confused and doubting. Could it be that there were forces in nature superior to human will, stronger than any man's desire? The consciousness of a great dread fell upon her spirit and benumbed it; a pure instinct shaped the call for help to her lips. Then with the noise of many waters in her ears she pitched forward and downward.

The fire was the first thing to force itself upon Katharine Garth's newborn

attention. A mighty and comforting blaze of pine logs roaring up a wide-mouthed chimney; how good it was to feel the warmth diffusing itself over her body! Punch, Stayner's English mastiff, rubbed his great head against her knee and whined his canine satisfaction. Again she closed her eyes in a mere animal content.

Now she was awake once more, and she gazed about her languidly curious. A candle end stuck in an empty ale bottle added its illumination to the light of the fire and made the interior fairly visible. A charcoal burner's hut, she decided, roughly built but tight and dry. She found herself sitting in a homemade armchair. Her boots stood steaming on the hearth, and her feet had been carefully wrapped in blankets. She felt confused and disinclined to think.

A tin of ink black coffee at her lips, and Ffulke Stayner's voice commanding her to drink. So hot was the fluid that it burnt her throat, but with every sip new life seemed to flow through her veins. She sat up and her hands went to her tumbled hair.

"Right!" cried Stayner heartily. Their eyes met and he flushed. She noticed the trickle of blood on his under lip, where a tooth had bitten clean through. What a fight it must have been! And what other man could have won it? But that was Ffulke Stayner.

They talked a little about the storm. If anything it was worse than ever, a real blizzard, as Stayner declared. He had spent two winters on a Wyoming ranch and ought to know. The conversation became a trifle inconsequential; it halted, started again briskly and then dropped into the gulf of silence. The man busied himself with elaborate attentions to the fire.

Katharine Garth looked up. "I suppose I ought to thank you for saving my life," she began.

Stayner made a gesture of dissent; it was too big a phrase for what he had done; would Katharine be good enough to drop all that. Besides, there was the dog; he had discovered her lying in the snow, and was the real hero of the occasion.

"Yet it happens to be true," she persisted. "My life. And now it's yours—by right of conquest."

"Oh, I say!"

"I have to look at things as they are. You've won out, as you said you would, and there is nothing for me to do but to give in. I'm beaten and I know it."

Stayner looked at her distrustfully. He was not a person of large imagination, but he felt instinctively that a woman is never so justly to be feared as when she announces her defeat. "Oh, I wouldn't put it that way," he protested.

"But I must know where I stand. You once made me a certain offer. Does it still hold good?"

"You can't think me such a cad as that."

"Yes or no?"

"Yes, then. You're hard on a fellow, Katharine, hard as nails."

"I'm sorry, but I've got to consider what other people—your world and mine—would think. Yes—and say."

"The public can be damned."

"Yes, but they won't be. You see, a man may choose his own way and be able to fight it out; it is even expected of him. Sometimes he loses and oftener he wins, and just because he *has* burned his ships. But a woman can't do that; *her* ships are a part of herself, and she perishes with them."

"Give me my chance," broke in the man eagerly. "I can make it up to you, Katherine, and I will. Only let me try."

The girl did not appear to hear him. She went on steadily:

"I've tried to look at the situation dispassionately, but I can't. I know that the consciousness of rectitude ought to sustain me, but it wouldn't—not as against that look in another woman's eyes. Cowardly, isn't it? But I know myself and my weakness."

"So there is nothing left for me but to accept the protection of your name. Now you mustn't misunderstand me. I haven't any idea of reprisals. Oh, I could have satisfaction, if that were what I wanted. A woman has a thousand ways in which she can hurt

the man who loves her. And, in a certain sense at least, I believe that you do care. Only you must be good to me—say that you will."

"I can go away—leave you in possession of the cabin." The man's eyes were averted, and his voice was thick and stammering.

"And perhaps have your life on my conscience? No, I don't want that."

Miserably conscious of one another's presence, they sat and stared at the fire. Then with a little cry Katharine started to her feet. But her twisted ankle gave way under her, and she fell back.

"What is it?" asked Stayner.

"Have you the time?"

"Just seven o'clock."

"Cousin Amelia will be wondering, anxious. But if it were only that!"

"I don't understand."

"You know that she is barely convalescent, and her heart is weak. Doctor Barr warned me that any shock, even undue excitement, might be dangerous."

A new light came into Ffulke Stayner's eyes, and he stood up alert and resolute. "I'm going to make for Lancaster's farm," he announced. "It's not more than a quarter of a mile down the trail, and I can telephone Edgewood from there. Then in the morning I can get assistance to come back for you."

"Is there no other way?"

He hesitated for the fraction of an instant. "Not for me," he answered. He pulled on sweater and gloves and adjusted his cap firmly. The girl looked on with troubled eyes. "You might take me along," she hazarded.

"You forget your bad ankle. No, it wouldn't do. You are not afraid to stay here?" he ended up sharply.

"No, I am not afraid. There is plenty of firewood, a good bolt to the door, and you can leave the dog with me. Certainly I am not afraid."

Ffulke Stayner nodded and laid his automatic pistol on the table. "Look out for her, Punch," he said, and the dog wagged an intelligent and acquiescent tail.

But Katharine still hung in the

wind. "After all, I may be fanciful," she objected. "Cousin Amelia is a sensible woman, and I may be making too much of a remote contingency. Very likely they will keep the whole matter from her; it would be easy to say that I had gone to bed with a headache."

Stayner shook his head. "When you come right down to it," he said, "there is every reason why the message should reach Miss Tyler with the least possible delay. You know how excitable negro servants are. Instead of keeping from their mistress the fact of your absence, they are probably weeping at her bedside and predicting the direst of disasters. Finally, it's a negligible risk for me. I am young and strong, and I have been through this sort of thing before. I've only to keep going down hill, and I'm morally certain to plump straight into Lancaster's front door. You mustn't think it anything to do." His voice broke. "I'm glad—I'm glad," he stammered. "I mean for the chance."

He crossed over to the door. The pressure of the wind was almost a solid wall, and he had to exert all his strength to force it open. A swirl of snow filled the cabin, putting out the candle and causing the scattered embers to hiss and splutter. Involuntarily Katharine laid her hand upon his arm. He put her gently from him and went out.

Katharine Garth stood and listened for a long time. Then she began to shiver violently, and she realized that she was still in her stocking feet. She went back to the fire and sat there until the first gray light sifted through the frosted windows. An odd-looking object standing upon a shelf at the far end of the room attracted her attention. She went over and examined it carefully; it was curious that she had not observed it before. But then that side of the house had been in the shadow. After a while she put on her wraps and sought the open air. Her ankle felt stronger, and she could walk without difficulty.

The snow must have ceased falling shortly after Stayner's departure, for

the traces of his footsteps were still visible. She followed them up, noting the confused character of their direction. Here he had stopped, trying one lead after another; there he had wandered in an irregular circle. Now he had started boldly on an entirely new course, and she went on quickly, the dog sniffing and barking in high excitement a little ahead of her. The tracks led to a small clearing in the pines. Here the footsteps were shorter and more uncertain, significant perhaps of a growing exhaustion. Just beyond a runnel of brook she discerned a mound, narrow and of the length of a man. Punch scratched furiously at the covering of snow and brought to view a pile of fence posts.

A crashing in the underbrush, and Ffulke Stayner stood at her side. "It's all right," he said. "I was at Lancaster's a little after eight, and got Cousin Amelia herself on the wire. She sends you her love and promises no end of coffee and hot waffles."

A sky of purest azure; the new fallen snow flushing rose pink under the level rays of the rising sun; in the middle distance farmer Lancaster's red and white oxen straining at the slow moving bobsled. The old life of the old, old world, and yet suddenly and magically transformed into something ever new and immortally youthful—life more abundant. Hot tears prickled at Katharine's eyelids.

Stayner was speaking now, and she forced herself to follow him.

"Of course it doesn't count—last night, you know. Cousin Amelia—everybody understands that I was at Lancaster's, while you stayed at the cabin with Punch. Nobody could say a word, or even dream of it."

"You mean that I am free?"

"Yes. It's a closed incident, unless—unless—" He boggled a little. "I only thought that you might be willing to shake hands on it—though I don't deserve even that."

She faced him, all alive and insistent. "Did you know about it?" she demanded. "I mean before you went."

"It! Rather indefinite, aren't you?"

But for all his bravado he was plainly disconcerted.

"Either you know or you don't know. Say it—say it."

"I suppose you are referring to the telephone. Yes, I did know."

"Come into the house." Together they entered the cabin and stood before the shelf that held the apparatus.

"It really is a telephone," said Stayner, talking very fast, and, as he thought, quite unconcernedly. "One of those rural 'grapevines' that the farmers around here put up. They use the wire fencing as a line, and bottle necks for insulators. But it works; you can talk over it."

"Then there really wasn't any reason why we shouldn't have called up Edgewood last night and talked quite comfortably with Cousin Amelia? Well, I'm waiting for an answer."

"I suppose not."

"Yet you would insist upon that quixotic, ridiculous and utterly preposterous adventuring of your life—didn't you now?"

"Since you put it that way—"

"I never heard of anything so absurd. Honestly, Ffulke Stayner, if this story got around people might say that you were not quite—not quite bright."

"I think that we had better be getting along," said Mr. Stayner stiffly.

"Just one moment. I want to speak to Cousin Amelia." She took down the receiver. "Please give me Lynn 36 . . . Yes, Edgewood . . . That you, Cousin Amelia? . . . Yes, indeed, I'm as right as rain. And you weren't worried? . . . Splendid! Oh, I forgot; I have a piece of news. Can't you guess? . . . I'm engaged to be married . . . Ffulke Stayner. Who else could it be? . . . That's *so* like you, dear. I am very happy. Well, expect us to breakfast."



D E A D D R E A M S

By MARGARET ERSKINE

DEAD dreams! Why, no dreams die;
They only tired grow,
So tired of a fainting hope,
And so
They fold their glittering rainbow wings
And close their dazzling eyes
And go to sleep in Future Land—
That land beyond the skies.
And some day they'll return again—
Return to you—and I.
God gave forever dreams to man!
Dead dreams! Dreams cannot die.



HE who surrenders when he is wrong is wise. He who surrenders when he is right is—married. But he, too, is wise.

THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By LOUISE KARR

YOU see, Sally, all the presents are in this room, and arranged in piles. We shall get them off in no time at all. I'm glad you're here, my dear, for company; there's nothing for you to do, as everything is thought out. . . . Yes, there are a good many—all Harry's family and mine, and the children's teachers and friends and the girls I knew at school and the people who work for us and my Sunday school class, and Harry's Boys' Club; I've been shopping ever since Thanksgiving. The expressman comes at one o'clock. Now let's see.

The Sturtevants' things are all on the bed; Aunt Eliza's are on the floor behind the steam radiator. Dear me, that wax doll is leaning against the radiator—its nose is gone! How vexatious! It won't do for Sophia; I'll have to put it in the missionary box. Elizabeth's things are on the bureau—stunning, aren't they? We've economized on the Grays, though; they're so good-natured; it's really a great relief. Nelly Gray writes four pages of solid thanks for a penwiper or a paper knife; I wish more people were like her. We give her any old thing we happen to have.

We'll begin with these—Just pull down the shade, won't you? . . . Thanks. Shall we put the woolly dog at the bottom, or the Dresden clock? . . . The clock fits in that corner? All right; it will come out on top if they turn the box upside down. There's a camera for Tom; is it too heavy to put on top of the clock? I can put tissue paper between. Now we're fairly started. We'll tie up these other things.

No string? Children, you run and get that—Lilian dear and Bessie—one

ball of pink string—pink is best; don't you think so, Sally? It goes with everything. Wait till I get my purse. . . . That's curious; I've mislaid it. Betty, Betty, have you seen my purse? I had it an instant ago. Look in the dining room; it may be under the bed. Why do you all stand about doing nothing? Can't you help me find my purse? . . . Well, don't waste any more time. Don't you realize how much there is to do? Have you any change, Sally? . . . Only a five? . . . Well, never mind, darlings; get it charged. One ball of pink, and a spool of narrow yellow ribbon. Run along, dears, and don't bother mamma. Oh, will you help them on with their things, Sally? . . . Yes, the leggings that button all the way up. Isn't it a bother to get children ready to go out in the winter? Don't cry, Bessie, because your sleeve sticks; Aunt Sally will tuck it in for you. Come and kiss mamma good-bye. Now run along, dears.

They're out of the way; now we can collect our thoughts. The tissue paper is in the top drawer of the highboy, and heavy wrapping paper and string—lots of it. Dear me! The children didn't need to go. Three balls, red and pink—and mucilage and scissors; you see, everything is well planned.

Before we really begin, I want you to help me decide about Cousin William's wedding present. As if Christmas wasn't enough without a wedding! I thought these candlesticks would do for him. Help me decide, won't you? You have such good taste. Of course I could send him the Dresden clock—but that is so nice for Aunt Maria. Or I could send him Sarah Jennings's tea caddy,

and Sarah the clock and Aunt Maria the candlesticks. How would that do? Get out the clock, Sally; it's at the bottom of the Sturtevant box. Too bad to unpack it. But you won't mind; we can tell so much better when we see it. I'll undo the tea caddy. Lovely, isn't it? Real Sheffield, and such a bargain. It's a pity to give it away. You know—I believe I'll keep it and give him the silver inkstand Willard Curtis sent us last year. I never liked it, but it's a handsome thing and very expensive, and I can have it scoured up so it will look like new. . . . Oh, he never saw it, my dear; he hasn't been here for over a year.

Here are the children back again. Dears, how quick you've been! Dear me, I haven't said who these were for or from! I wrote Elizabeth last night, and then I was so tired I put off the rest till today. Where's my list? There are some alterations. You see, Cousin Marian died, so I sha'n't have to send her anything. . . . No, Betty, we don't want any lunch. . . . Oh, you would like some? . . . Well, Betty, bring Miss Sally something on a tray—anything, Betty, *anything*.

Here are a lot of things I got at art sales and fairs. Now you read the names on that list till we come to one that wants an article. I'll hold them up. Here's a big white sachet bag; looks like a pillow case. Dr. Wilkinson? . . . No—Tommy Raymond? . . . No—Cousin Sarah—just the thing! But wait—it's what she gave me last year; the tag's on it yet—"With Sarah's love." She always gets such hideous things. We'll give it to Lilian's gymnasium teacher. The child is *so* fond of her. A set of hemstitched silk dusters. Rather nice, aren't they? I think I could use them myself; I believe I'll give them to Harry—he won't mind; he's such a dear. This tin peanut man under an umbrella? Cunning, isn't it? I got that at Stears' last week and paid a dollar for it. Then I saw the same

thing at Lacy's yesterday for twenty-five cents, and I thought I'd buy that and take the other back and save seventy-five cents and make it do for Jennie Hathaway; nobody could tell the difference. Let me see—which is the dollar one? How stupid! They're exactly alike! I can't take the twenty-five-cent one back to Stears'—and I *won't* take the dollar one back to Lacy's. . . . What! Give them seventy-five cents? No, indeed. Do it up and send it. . . . Which one? *Either*; I don't care; I can save the other till next Christmas. What is the use of trying to economize, anyway?

The expressman! Why, we're not ready. Tell *him* to wait. Do these things up and direct them, Sally; be quick. Hold this board while I nail it up, Betty. Lilian, put a large piece of paper on the floor, dear, and pile—oh, oh, my finger! Can't you hold that board steady, Betty? . . . The man is gone? Well, tell him to come back in an hour. Oh, my finger!

Now, Sally, we *must* decide about that wedding present. Here's a lovely traveling bag; I'd forgotten I had it. It's just the thing for William, a regular man's thing—his wife would never touch it. It's so sensible and personal to give him something for himself alone. . . . What! *Your present to me?* Oh, how sweet of you, dear! It's just what I wanted. Run and put it on the piano, Lilian, with the other family things. . . . What! You've brought all the things in here and thought you were helping! Oh, Lilian! I can't help crying, Sally, I'm so tired. The children's presents, and yours and Harry's—I thought those bundles that I was putting in the Sturtevant box felt queer—and now it's all nailed up!

What! *Will* you? Are you sure you don't mind finishing up? Well, it isn't much work; just get the things straightened up and the boxes nailed up and the parcels tied and directed. You are a dear girl; perhaps I shall feel better to go and lie down.



THE ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER

By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

*She loved the autumn, I the spring,
Sad all the songs she used to sing,
And in her face was strangely set
Some vague inherited regret.*

*Some look in all things made her sigh,
Yea, sad to her the morning sky:
"So sad, so sad, its beauty seems"—
I hear her say it still in dreams.*

*But when the day grew gray and old,
And wintry stars shone bright and cold,
Then only in her face I saw
A mystic glee, a joyous awe.*

IT was late in September, and the woods and lanes were peopled with those frail haunted flowers of autumn, which seem less like real flowers than the ghosts of flowers. The trees still preserved a vivid mask of foliage; yet one realized that there was nothing behind, but that at a breath they would crumble like the painted faces of the dead when exposed to the air. There was a death stillness on the land, as though the earth was waiting for something to pass away, and the air was filled with the sighing of departing spirits.

The night was one of such brilliant moonlight, the kind of enchanted moonlight that forces one as with a spell out of doors, that I had taken a fancy toward midnight to go for a stroll in the woods that surround my country home. The world was literally almost as bright as day, but with what a different brightness. How different indeed from the light of the sun this cold blue radiance, this spectral world of jet and silver. How startlingly fantastic the shadows compared with the warm companionable shadows of noon; how goblinlike the friendly earth. Nature has become

supernatural—just because the sun has set and the moon has risen. Plainly this light is the radiance that comes from a dead face, the dead face of the moon.

Pondering such fancies, I had passed on through the sleeping trees latticed and dappled with silver, when I confess to being brought to a startled pause with a sudden heartbeat. Yes, I was afraid! A few yards ahead of me, bending low, as if seeking something, in a grassy clearing white with moonlight—was it a girl, or was it a spirit? Even when the figure raised itself two singularly large and luminous eyes looked into mine with an expression almost as startled as my own. I still asked myself, was the beautiful unearthly creature before me—a girl or a spirit?

"Goodness, how you frightened me!" she exclaimed after a brief pause—a human utterance which reassured me that she was a girl.

"And goodness, how you frightened me!" I laughed. And thus, so strangely met at midnight in the middle of a moonlit wood, Miranda Fludd and I began our friendship.

Miranda and I had been neighbors for some time without knowing it, for, the only daughter of a widowed father—a recluse of whom country rumor whispered awestruck things—she was seldom seen outside the mossed walls of the beautiful old manor house which had been in her father's family for generations. Sir Robert Fludd, Baronet, did not encourage the visits of his neighbors, nor, on account of his mysterious reputation, were they eager to pass the barriers of his seclusion. Thus Miranda lived a solitary life, though in that for her was no hardship. Nature had not

given her the face of a spirit for nothing, and it was plain to look at her that the society in which she would find her proper element was hardly of this world. In fact her world, the only real world for her, was a world of dreams, a spiritual world of which her books, her music and the strange studies she shared with her father were the symbols and the keys. For companionship she asked nothing more than that father, whom she loved with a passionate affection.

When our first mutual fear of each other had passed in friendly laughter:

"I declare," I said, "that I took you for either a wood spirit, or a young witch gathering simples."

"Medea, eh," she answered, with a voice that seemed made of the moonlight, "getting magic herbs to bewitch Jason. Well, perhaps you were not so far wrong. Do you know what these are?" and she held up a handful of strangely shaped roots. Her voice told me that she took a girlish pleasure in mystifying me.

"They are mandrakes," she said, "the deadly mandragora."

"Did they cry out, as you uprooted them?" I asked.

"Oh, of course," she answered simply. "Didn't you hear them as you came through the wood? And see," she continued, "look at the shape of this one. Isn't it exactly, as the books say, in the shape of a man?"

And she held one of the ungainly roots against the light of the moon. It certainly had the disagreeable appearance of a homunculus, and in that haunted light made an uncomfortably uncanny impression upon me.

I had in my youth, like many another moonstruck boy, dabbled in the occult sciences, and had once belonged to a mysterious secret society, which professed to reveal bloodcurdling knowledge in exchange for a substantial annual subscription. As I walked by the side of my young sibyl back to her home through the moonlit woods, I rapidly furbished up my memory of that old romantic lore, and was thus able to surprise her by an acquaintance with her lunar fancies, which though, indeed,

superficial enough, served my purpose in creating an immediate bond of sympathy between us. She was especially delighted to hear that I was familiar with her ancestor, the famous seventeenth century alchemist and astrologer, Robert Fludd—or Robertus de Fluctilus, as he called himself after the Latinizing fashion of his day—and that I still counted one of his mystical folios among the treasures of my library.

"I must tell my father that, and you must certainly come and see him. He sees hardly anyone, but he will certainly make an exception of one who can talk to him about Robertus de Fluctilus."

I mentally thanked heaven for what had long seemed to me those absurd old boyish studies. Actually old Robert Fludd had seemed to me the most incomprehensible old lunatic, but as I walked by the side of his fascinating young descendant, I began to perceive the divine usefulness of his ponderous speculations. Had it not been for those apparently absurd boyish studies, I should probably have never seen Miranda Fludd again. As it was, it had long been written in the stars that we were to meet again many times, go on meeting indeed, till . . . But that is to anticipate.

A day or two after, I received an invitation to take tea at the old manor. I found Miranda seated in the window of a long low-ceilinged room dark with black oak wainscoting and massive rafters. She was gazing with a curious wistful happiness into an Old World garden formal with cut yews, and, so to say, gaily elegiac with the bright colored funereal flowers of autumn.

With her thick gold hair, her strangely luminous skin, and her great sad blue eyes, in contrast with the black oak room, she seemed even more of an apparition than when I had met her in the moonlit wood. She seemed literally made of light, as some flowers are made of such exquisitely diaphanous texture as hardly to suggest earthly matter at all.

Later on I came to understand, or, at all events, to know more of that mystic glee—I can only call it—in her face as

she looked out on that autumn garden. For me it was saddening, and suggested melancholy thoughts, but with Miranda just the reverse. Turning to me, as if she had divined what I was thinking:

"You are wondering, aren't you," she said, "why I love this sad garden so, these autumn flowers. You love the spring best and the summer, don't you? I know you do. Perhaps I'll tell you how I know some day. But spring and summer seem all sadness to me. They are so pathetically full of hope and purpose—so youthfully in earnest, so busy and bustling, in such a hurry with their flowers and leaves. They never seem to think of their passing away, never dream that it is all illusion. But autumn has no illusions. She knows. She is tranquil and complete, and she is not so sad as she seems. If you look deep enough into her eyes you will find an unearthly hope beneath all their sadness. The hope in the eyes of spring and summer is of this world. The hope in the eyes of autumn is spiritual—the hope of resurrection, you might say. Yes, autumn is the season of spirits. Spring and summer are too noisy with abundance of life; but in autumn the spiritual world comes very near. Autumn is so still that you can hear the spirits walking on the fallen leaves, and catch their voices sometimes in the hush of the woods. . . ."

She paused a moment, and a look of pain came into her eyes as she added: "And perhaps there is another reason for my loving autumn. I will tell you some day."

She was thinking, as I afterward came to know, of her mother, who had died in the autumn, at the moment of giving her birth, a mother whom, though she had never seen her, she had, all her life, felt mystically close by her side.

As we sat thus looking out into the autumn garden, her father joined us, a tall distinguished man about fifty, with a beautiful visionary face, yet singularly in contrast with his daughter's. For, whereas, she seemed made of light, he was almost Southern in his swarthiness, with his raven black hair curiously splashed with locks of pure white, and his skin of a deep rich olive, in contrast

to which eyes of a vivid Northern gray glowed like blue flames beneath a strong but dreaming brow. The eyes seemed to be less eyes than windows through which one could gaze into the blue depths of the dreamer's soul. They suggested that their owner used them but little on the visible world, saving their searching gaze for realms of spiritual adventure, and "forms more real than flesh and blood."

His manner was somewhat that of a high bred priest, gentleness and authority combined, the gentleness of one withdrawn from the world of men, the authority of one belonging to the world of the spirit.

But all the various charm and force of his personality was concentrated in his voice, which was singularly the masculine counterpart of his daughter's. Bronze on his lips, on hers it had turned to silver—an achievement of human alchemy which, to my thinking, outweighed all the achievements of his famous ancestors, whatever they may have been.

My old smattering of Rosicrucianism served me again with the father as it had done with the daughter, and after tea had been drunk and the first preliminaries of acquaintance got over we repaired to the library and the laboratories of this modern Rosicrucian.

The library which was very large and overflowed from one great vaulted chamber into various mysterious alcoves and corridors was the kind of romantic library the youthful book-lover sees in his dreams when he first begins to collect book plates and first editions: great folios bound in vellum, with titles written on their backs in faded monastic ink, other folios of still more Leviathan make printed in black letter, and bound in wood and leather with metal clasps, grimoires and herbals, rare treatises on alchemy and astrology, Paracelsus, Van Helmont, William Lilly, Sibley, and Dr. Dee, priceless early editions of Hermes Trismegistus, Apollonius of Tyana, Iamblichus, Plotinus, and all the later Platonists—strange monstrosities of learning curiously shoulder to shoulder with the

latest speculations of modern science, treatises on radium and the last discovered planet.

I remarked on this apparent incongruity.

"Of course," said Miranda's father, "the world does not realize that alchemy and astrology are progressive sciences like any other. These old writers were but pioneers, just as Galen was a pioneer in medicine, Ptolemy in astronomy. Of course, I am aware that the world at large does not regard alchemy and astrology as sciences at all, indeed, believes them to have been long since extinct, or only surviving in the hands of impostors. Such opinions, however, are but a part of the vast ignorance of the world on every conceivable subject, particularly on subjects which border on the mysteries of life and human destiny. As a matter of fact, modern science—contrary to vulgar opinion—is more and more coming to the conclusions long ago shadowed by those mystical sciences of which I am a humble student, and the modern astronomer is much less likely to deny the influence of the planets on human lives and the possibility of a science founded thereon than the man in the street, as the modern chemist is unmistakably rapidly approaching to the discovery of that grand arcanum which with the old alchemists was no mere vulgar desire of burning lead into gold but was the dream of some one element, a chemical unit, so to say, from which all the others have sprung, and can still be reproduced. . . ."

And then we passed into the laboratory, where, instead of crucibles and alembics and crocodiles suspended from the ceiling, and all such paraphernalia of the alchemist of fiction, we came upon a laboratory of the most up-to-date pattern, furnished with every form of delicate apparatus with which modern science sets its ingenious traps for the Infinite.

But there was a smaller laboratory leading out of the large one, a quaint room with an indescribably feminine look, in spite of its array of retorts and phials, to which my heart was suddenly drawn. Bundles of dried plants and

flowers hung from the walls, and a glass retort filled with the beautiful leaves of some strange plant was bubbling softly over a spirit lamp. The room was fragrant with the breath of flowers.

"This is Miranda's witch's kitchen," said her father, tenderly laying his hand on his daughter's shoulder. "Do you wonder that our country neighbors believe that we are in league with the devil? It is well for us that we are living in the twentieth century. Three hundred years ago they would have ducked us in the village pond, or even burned us at the stake."

"And, after all," said Miranda with a smile, pointing to the bubbling retort, "I am only trying a woman's experiment with some frivolous perfume."

This visit was but the first of many, for my genuine interest in his studies had so won the heart of the father that I was soon made free of his library and in course of time came to help him with many curious experiments on which this is not the place to enlarge. I had won the heart of the father. But how was it with the heart of the daughter? That, need I say, was the "grand arcanum" on which alone my thoughts were bent. Yet as time passed, and our almost daily intercourse became more and more intimate, the answer to that question became more and more enigmatic. It was plain that I had inspired Miranda with a sincere affection. There was a rare harmony of tasks and ideals between us. She evidently cared to be with me. We loved the same things, thought the same thoughts, and we laughed together as we dreamed together. But did we love each other? Or rather did Miranda love me? As for me, I had loved her from the moment that my startled eyes fell upon her beautiful face that midnight in the moonlit wood.

But how was it with her? Again and again I had been on the verge of confessing my love, but always it seemed as if some mysterious invisible barrier intervened. It was not that she was cold to me, or overtly discouraging. It was something subtler, more

spiritual than that. Whatever it was, it was so real that I allowed month after month to go by without daring to unlock my heart; for indeed I feared too, that to speak might not only fail to win me Miranda's love, but lose for me as well that enchanted friendship, that fairy intercourse with the most lovely and exquisite and holy of God's creatures.

But at last an hour came when I broke my silence, and waited with breaking heart for my answer.

It was again autumn, and once more Miranda and I were seated in the window of the old oak room looking out upon the garden with its elegiac blooms.

After I had spoken, Miranda was silent a long while, gazing in her wistful way out into the garden. One might almost have thought that she had not heard.

Then at length she turned to me with a smile of such heavenly tenderness that my heart almost failed within me and laying her hand on mine, and looking deep into my eyes.

"Dear," she said, "before I answer you, I must tell you something. I can hardly expect you to believe, or rather to understand, what I am going to say. If you should decide that I am out of my mind, the victim of hallucination, I surely would not be surprised. Yet I beg you for your own happiness, yes, let me say our happiness, that you will believe literally what I am going to tell you. Listen, dear, I have already a lover—"

I started with pain.

"Wait," she continued—"a lover from whom I can never part—but he is not of this world. I only meet him in dreams, dreams of the night and dreams of the day. Sometimes when you see me sitting silent—silent, as you say, as a porcelain sphinx, I am with him. I cannot explain this to you. Only I want you to understand that I am not talking in images. I am not speaking of an ideal, such as young girls are said to cherish in their imaginations. I am speaking of a fact—a personality as real as you are. The only difference is that I meet him in one world and I meet you in another. But you are not more real than he is. I

cannot explain it any better, and I understand it as little as you do. Only I know that he came to me about three years ago—in the autumn. I am always nearest to him in the autumn."

She stopped, seeing the pain in my face.

"Dear," she said gently—"for you are very dear to me. I do not mean to hurt you. Only I felt I must tell you this first, before—"

"Before?" I asked in a voice she could hardly hear.

"Before I told you that I loved you and that, if knowing what I have told you, you still would have it so—I am your wife."

The next moment we were in each other's arms, and in a month's time we were married; for in my heart, during Miranda's strange confession, I had said to myself, being unfortunately opaque and unclairvoyant of nature, that it was all a fancy of her imaginative temperament and that, at all events, a living man had nothing to fear from an astral lover.

Herein, however, I was to find myself cruelly mistaken, and bitterly to experience the literal truth of which Miranda had warned me. We had scarcely been married a month when one of her strange fits of silence came over her. She would sit by the hour with a strange happy smile on her face, apparently all but oblivious of my presence, and I knew that she was looking into the eyes of that other lover I could not see.

Then as suddenly she would come out of her dream, and turn to me once more, all heavenly gentleness, a human wife; and again we were the happiest lovers on the round earth—till her next visitation. And, as the months went by these grew harder to bear. Suddenly she would say: "Dear one, I must go alone to the woods today," and I knew that she was going to meet that mystic lover; but such truancies were less terrible to endure than the strange trances into which she would sometimes suddenly fall when I was by her side, evidently losing all memory of me and seeing nothing but his face—his face there perhaps within

THE ASTROLOGER'S DAUGHTER

a yard of me, yet absolutely hidden from me.

How often I have laughed in bitter mockery at my boast that a living man had nothing to fear from an astral lover. Fool! One can deal with what one can see. But how fight the invisible? How often I have exclaimed in my agony:

"If only I could see him!"

Sometimes I have begged her to try and make me see him, but it was not in her power—for the torture of seeing her smile on a face I could not see was more than I could bear.

Indeed, as the months went by, I felt that the end of it all for me could be nothing but madness, and deeply as I loved Miranda, I had almost come to the decision that the only way to save us both was for Miranda and me to part.

Autumn had come once more, and with it for me a deepening dread. Had not Miranda told me that he was nearer to her in the autumn?

But to my surprise and growing joy September came and went, and my wife's eyes still remained all mine. October, too, and yet she had not wandered from me, and then November, but still he had not come.

It was often on my tongue's end to speak my happiness but I dared not lest I should thus suddenly lose it.

But one night, when our hearts seemed very near to each other, Miranda saw my thought in my eyes.

"Dear," she said, "don't fear any more. He will never come again."

I took her in my arms. Then with bent head, and cheeks like a wild rose, she said falteringly: "Shall I tell you why? I shall have to whisper . . ."

And she whispered the lovely eternal secret that wives have whispered to husbands since the world began.

"So you understand now why he will never come again, don't you, dear?" said Miranda with a rather wicked little laugh.



THE ISLE OF DREAMS

By BLANCHE SHOEMAKER WAGSTAFF

I OWNED an isle of dreams within the sea
Wave-garlanded in green, afar and fair,
Where nymphs made music with their unwound hair
And stars shone lantern-like through each palm tree.

Alone my spirit dwelt, domed by the sky,
Clad in wind raiment, tended by the moon;
Hope wove about my heart a happy tune,
And solitude seemed mine till I should die.

When lo, one evening light awoke on high,
And the gold boat of Love came gliding by!



OLD ROCKSEY—Why did you quarrel with the Count, my dear?

Miss Rocksey—He called me his treasure, and it sounded too suggestive.

THE DIARY OF A DUCKLING

By FRED JACKSON

The Twenty-third of December.

ONLY two days more until Christmas, and eight until New Year's, so I'm starting my next year's diary today. This will make the sixth volume of my personal history, for I began when I was quite young, and I'm seventeen now—almost eighteen. The other five are locked away in the bottom of my desk, secure from prying eyes, as the first few are rather amusing and I don't intend anyone to see them until I'm quite an elderly person in black silk and spectacles. *Then* it won't matter so much if my little grandchildren peep, and smile over Granny's early days. I shouldn't be afraid that Father Goose or Mother Goose would pry, of course, even if they had time to realize that I'm keeping a diary, but Mary, our maid, has an insatiable curiosity, and Brent would be glad to have something to tease me about.

I always start the new volumes a few days before Christmas because Father Goose says you should always begin to tell a thing at an interesting point—and he is an author, so he knows. But Christmas isn't going to be such an interesting point this year, I'm afraid. Father Goose has been doing a lot of magazine stories, and the editors are *always* behind with the cheques, and Mother Goose is still working on the illustrations for his book, so of course *she* hasn't been making any money. To tell the truth—though I wouldn't have either of them find it out for the world—it's kept me pretty busy making my household money suffice, prices are going up so. I shouldn't be able to make ends meet at all if it weren't that

they are both so busy, they don't pay much attention to what they eat, and they're satisfied with almost anything. I think it fun now—in a way—to be quite, quite poor, because I get lots of opportunities for trying new dishes and for being ingenious; but I used to dream all the time when I was younger about being tremendously wealthy and having servants and carriages and automobiles and steam yachts—and such things. Brent prefers being poor, he says, and he really should know, because he's tried both ways. His mother and father live on the Avenue in an enormous house. Brent lives there, too, though he is usually at our flat when he is in town.

He likes to watch me cook and mend—Hannah, our old maid, taught me—and I don't mind having him about, because he's nice and congenial, and when he's with me he doesn't *seem* so old as he is. He must be quite thirty, I should think. I like him very much, but I would like him more if he wouldn't try to be so foolish sometimes. I wonder if he had an unhappy love affair when he was younger?

I've made him a muffler for Christmas as a sort of joke, because he says he smokes cigarettes to keep his throat warm. It's white silk with his initials embroidered on it in black. I've made Mother Goose three blue painting smocks to match her eyes, because she is very particular about the color of her things, and I bought her the brass tray she admired down on Allen Street. Father Goose gets a pair of worsted slippers and the volume of La Fontaine's fables. It took me an hour to get it away from the second hand book store man, but it was one of the 1668 edition,

inscribed to the Dauphin of France, and I persevered. I got all these by eating things I don't like and saving the pennies. It's a trial to be "mistress of the house" and not be able to order what you like to eat, but it's good, I find, to deny yourself things occasionally.

December Twenty-fourth (Afternoon).

WELL, what do you think? When I came in this morning from my music lesson there were Mother Goose and Father Goose and Brent all gathered in Mother Goose's studio, and all talking at once. Two wonderful things have happened, and I am to benefit by both of them. Father Goose has sold his big serial for a perfectly stunning price, and Brent's father and mother have asked me to spend Christmas with them! Think of it, little diary!

Father Goose said I was to have the last cheque as a Christmas present, so that I could buy the clothes I should need. Then Brent offered to go shopping with me, so we didn't wait for lunch but started straight off. And we went in a taxi!

Then we lunched at Sherry's—I was glad I happened to have on my new furs and my blue tailor-made suit—and by the time we got back home actually everything was there! This when the shops are crowded to overflowing and most purchasers are carrying home their goods themselves!

Mother Goose put away her sketching to help me pack, and Father Goose helped fold things, and Mary hurried to finish the pressing we had asked her to do, and Brent got in everyone's way and offered advice and suggestions until we made him sit on the window sill and whistle "*La Bohème*" from beginning to end. That kept him still until my trunk was packed.

Mother Goose was almost mothery and not goosey at all, for the first time in her life, I believe; she helped me fix my hair up on top of my head the way she wears hers, and loaned me a set of turquoise in dull gold and a string of pearls from her jewel box. I wanted a ring, too—the pale rose-colored cameo one, but she laughed and said I'd wear

rings soon enough, and then I thought she was going to cry, her blue eyes got so big and misty. But she didn't. I've never seen my mother cry yet. She's always laughing and jesting like a girl—even when we're *very* much embarrassed financially and things are most uncertain. All artistic people have such times, of course—even the biggest, because they aren't practical enough to save what they make. And so—

The MacNeils' second man has just come for my trunk, and the automobile is waiting for Brent and me. I'm going to slip my diary into my muff and take it adventuring, too.

December Twenty-fourth (Evening).

I'm sitting before the fire in my bedroom writing this. The maid—*my* maid, if you please—has just gone, after combing my hair and massaging my face and tucking me into bed, but after she went I got into this gown and turned on the lights again.

Brent's parents are dear. I call them the Duke and the Duchess, because *he* is tall and straight and soldierly, with heavy white hair and eyebrows and very sharp eyes, and nothing but "Duchess" could suit *her*, because she is very round and pink and jolly-looking, and she abounds in black satin and diamonds. Mr. MacNeil reminds me strongly of the Earl in "*Little Lord Fauntleroy*," but because his wife looks so much like a duchess, I shall call him the Duke.

When I arrived with Brent, both of them were waiting in the hallway to meet me. They both told me how glad they were to see me, and how splendid it is to be the daughter of two celebrities—Mother Goose and Father Goose are celebrities, of course. And the Duchess wanted to know if it was quite true, as Brent had told her, that I was called "Duckling," and that I superintended the housekeeping myself, and that I called my mother, "Mother Goose." She was especially curious about the last, because she had seen a lot of my mother's pictures, and she imagined her very stately and serious and awe inspiring—almost like a queen. Mother Goose! Of course, I had to laugh at

that, and the Duke and Duchess laughed, too, and so we were good friends at once.

Cobbler—that's the maid's name—has just come back to see what is the matter. The Duchess noticed my light and rang for her, so I must stop writing and be tucked into bed again.

December Twenty-fifth (Afternoon).

MERRY Christmas, little grandchildren! I woke up at eight o'clock this morning to find a table near me, and all kinds of things piled up on it.

It seems that no one but the Duke goes down to breakfast here. The Duchess usually has her tray sent up at ten exactly, and Brent waits for luncheon. I figured that my breakfast wasn't due for two hours and a half, and as I am accustomed to a much earlier one than that at home, I concluded to dress hurriedly and try to get down in time to join the Duke. I lost my way twice before I reached the breakfast room, but when I did arrive the Duke was almost too amazed and delighted to rise. He chuckled continually while he ordered Griggson to drag the Duchess's chair out for me, to get me a footstool and lay another cover, and he insisted upon my pouring his coffee out for him.

I wasn't a bit awed, somehow, though he *is* a millionaire—probably on account of the experience I've had entertaining Father Goose's and Mother Goose's friends, but we chattered away and exchanged confidences quite happily for an hour or two, and then he invited me to take a walk with him.

When I came down again, with my best black suit on and my black furs, he tucked my hand under his arm quite comfortably and we went to church together. He is just like Brent, only much older and much more sensible, of course. Somehow, Brent doesn't seem so very old, after all. Thirty is *young*, I guess.

Luncheon was a most elaborate affair. There was a huge Christmas tree glittering with little lights in the center of the table, and each course was decorated with holly and greens. And the plum pudding was served in jeweled dishes. I

never *imagined* such gorgeous china as they have here. Afterward Brent and I explored the house—to the wonder of the army of servants—and criticized and commented and told each other just what *we* should have if we were building such a palace; it was great fun. Then the Duchess and I went driving, for it is not a very cold day. I wore my black-plumed hat and a wonderful black velvet and ermine carriage wrap that she insisted upon lending me. When we returned, tea in the hallway and then—an hour alone in my room with my big box of candy, my diary and an armful of new books. I can scarcely believe I'm only a half-hour's ride from the flat and Father and Mother Goose. This seems like another land—another world. What if it were—and I could never go back again?

December Twenty-fifth (Evening).

I'm *pretty!* I never knew it before, but tonight when Cobbler finished hooking me into my *crêpe de chine* gown and I stood before the long oval mirror with the lights at the sides, the fact was quite, *quite* evident. My eyes looked big and black, and my cheeks were flushed, and I—I was very pretty. It was the gown, I suppose, mostly, because I've never seemed particularly attractive before—and it really is a beautiful gown. It's all creamy and soft and shimmery, and it glistens like silver when I move; then there are quantities of spider web lace on it, and strings of teentsy weentzy pearls—and yet it looks very simple and girlish, somehow. The lace on the bodice falls halfway over my arms instead of sleeves—I know my future grandchildren will be interested in that, especially the girls—and just the tips of my shoulders peep out. Cobbler put a dash of powder on, too, to make my hair and eyes seem darker still, and I wore the Duke's ruby chain.

At dinner I discovered who "Bob" is. He's Brent's younger brother, a big blond fellow, much handsomer than Brent and *much more* "dashing." He's not out of college long, and he's rather "wild," I'm afraid—not that I've heard anything about him or that he seems

so, but girls can tell, I think. He has big blue eyes, and he dresses very well.

I sat between him and Brent because the Duke and Duchess always sit side by side when there are no guests, and it was rather funny because the boys vied with each other all through dinner to keep my attention. Later, we had a box for "The Ugly Duckling." They planned it yesterday before anyone knew whether Bob would be here, but Bob decided that he wanted to go, too. He sat next to me at the theater, and didn't once go out to smoke as Brent and the Duke did. I urged him to, but he wouldn't for fear Brent would get his seat. Fancy! And when some people stopped in to speak to us, he let Brent entertain them. One girl—a very pretty one—Brent's second cousin—stayed with us and occupied the vacant chair next to Brent. They talked all through the act, which was thoughtless, it seemed to me, because the play was simply splendid. It was a sort of gala night, and all the people in the other boxes looked at us through their opera glasses, which I thought very rude and embarrassing but the others didn't mind it at all. I noticed several of the prettiest chorus girls watching us, too, and they seemed to disturb Bob more than the people in his own set. One very pretty blonde one smiled at him quite pointedly, but he pretended he didn't notice. I wonder if he knew her?

We went to supper afterward and then home. Brent scarcely spoke to me the whole evening. He simply kept his eyes fixed on me, which seemed odd, even if he *wasn't* feeling well, as he says. He seemed able to talk to the cousin person. She has glittery red hair and green eyes, and she was all in dull green. I think there is something very unattractive about green eyes; they look cold, somehow.

I'm writing this, tucked up in bed, while Cobbler sits patiently waiting to extinguish the lights. It's been the happiest Christmas of my life.

December Twenty-sixth (Late).

I AWOKE at nine this morning—one soon learns lazy ways, I find—in a room

simply redolent of violets. There must have been an acre of them, I think—all from Bob, and Cobbler had arranged them before I stirred. So I dressed in very good spirits and started downstairs, to come upon Bob in person on the lowest step, smoking his pipe. He had been waiting there since eight, he told me. Wasn't it nice of him to wait for me?

He sat in the Duke's chair and I sat in the Duchess's and we tried to see who could eat the most waffles. Then he dared me to go out with him for a spin in his big gray motor. He is a reckless driver, so we were able to get quite a distance from town through the most beautiful white country. Nothing could be more splendid than flying along with the wind, on a smooth, white road, with glistening snow and gaunt black trees and cunning little cottages on either side. But unfortunately something went wrong with the engine when we weren't expecting it, and we had to leave the car and tramp miles in the snow to the nearest railroad station. Poor Bob was overcome with remorse until he saw that I was amused at our mishap; then we went along as cheerfully as though it were a picnic. From the depot Bob 'phoned for his chauffeur to come for the car, and we cuddled down beside the miniature stove until the next train arrived. He is very different from Brent, but nice, anyway. He seems ever so much more brilliant and accomplished, and yet I feel much more comfortable with Brent. Bob's company affects me a good deal the same way champagne does. He is always bubbling merrily, and so *you* bubble merrily, too.

Both the Duchess and Brent were waiting for us when we returned. Brent was very quiet again—maybe because he'd had to wait so long to eat; he doesn't breakfast, you know.

After luncheon Brent played "La Bohème" for us beautifully—it is my favorite opera—but it was too pathetic to please Bob, so he charged the piano stool and played and sang all the latest topical songs. Later he was called to town by telephone, and as Brent had

something to do in town, too, they went off together. As the Duchess and I were left alone, she invited me into her boudoir for the afternoon. She told me about both her boys, and I told about Father Goose and Mother Goose and me. It seems Bob is very bright but restless and not at all ambitious. He can accomplish anything he undertakes, but he usually undertakes nothing more serious than the planning of entertainments or the designing of guns or the running of motor cars. Brent is her favorite. He is more serious-minded and reliable than Bob, and spends his time in protecting the family interests and in studying practical philanthropy. I always thought him so foolish and nonsensical! I wonder if he was being that way to please me?

When I went to my room to dress—it was the Opera tonight—Cobbler began speaking of the boys again. Bob is *her* favorite, although she admires Brent, too. But she *loves* Bob.

I wore my pale pink chiffon gown this evening and a corsage of Bob's big violets for ornaments. Brent sent me a box of Beauties late in the afternoon, but I couldn't carry them, as they wouldn't harmonize with my gown and I was already dressed when they came.

When I came downstairs Brent was alone in the music room, and I apologized for not wearing his flowers, and asked him if he was feeling better. He said he was, as he was growing accustomed to the pain. He acted very queerly, I thought.

No use to *try* to write about that opera of Puccini's. There are some things one can't express in words. But afterward we went on to a dance given by Mrs. Somebody, who was quite fat, and whose fat daughter is a debutante. I met a lot of people and droves of men asked me to dance, but I didn't care to, so I stayed with Brent and Bob, until we lost Brent in the crush at the foot of the stairs.

We looked all around but we couldn't find him again, so Bob took me into the supper room, which was decorated like a garden, and then—it's simply too silly to write—*proposed* to me! I

didn't know whether to laugh or not—but it was my *first proposal*, and I'd wanted it to be so different. I wanted to cry. There were people passing our table continually, so he had to stop every few seconds or else risk being overheard, and we both had to look as uninterested as though we were talking about the weather. But I *was* interested—I couldn't help being interested, because it was *my first proposal*, and I'm only *eighteen*. But I was horribly disappointed, too. He didn't even offer to take my hand—I wouldn't have let him if he *had*—and when I said that I *couldn't*—that it was ridiculous and impossible—he didn't look so very much put out. I didn't want him to suffer, of course, but I *did* want him to mind a little. He just sighed in the most absurd fashion and grinned and said: "I was afraid you'd turn me down. Friday never was a lucky day for me. I'll try some other time." I had to laugh then.

I wonder if he really does love me, or if he was merely amusing himself? What *would* he have done if I'd accepted him? It isn't at all improbable, for he is handsome and pleasing and—likeable—but he isn't *safe*. I couldn't trust my future to him. A future is such a long, long time that a girl has got to be sure. For a week one might risk more—but never for years and years and years. Some girls would have given thanks on their knees, I suppose, but I couldn't help imagining him in our little flat, helping me with the dishes as Father Goose helps Mother Goose sometimes when the domestic staff has her day off—or petting me when I have the mumps and my face is swelled up like a football! A girl isn't *always* pretty and fresh and inviting, but husbands mustn't mind that.

I wonder what is getting into me? I've never reasoned about those things before. I think I'm growing up.

Brent found us there at the little table eating ices and cakes and turning the whole interview into a joke, but when we started home we all three maintained an unbroken silence. Can girls always tell, I wonder, when they reach

a crisis in their lives? I felt as though I was nearing one as we all drove home together. I think that was the first time I've seen Bob serious. Even when he was proposing to me he had a curious kind of smile in his eyes, but it seemed, somehow, as though he was laughing at himself more than at me. What could have made me think that?

December Twenty-seventh (Afternoon).

I'VE got my Christmas gift from Brent, at last—the one he planned to give me first and wouldn't tell me about—and it's a diamond ring! But I must tell all about it quickly before he wakens, little shadowy Grandchildren out in the future there! I've been playing little airs to him on the piano, with the soft pedal on "Oh, Promise Me," and "Just a Song at Twilight," and the lullaby from "Erminie"—and he's fallen asleep on the rose-colored davenport there, because he's very, very tired. I'm writing this on a low stool by the fire, where I can see him and go to him the instant he stirs.

This morning, somehow, I couldn't sleep, so I crept out of bed at six o'clock and dressed myself quietly and slipped down the stairs to the library, intending to get "The Way of Dreams"—one of the books Bob gave me; I started it yesterday.

Well, when I opened the door of the room quite noiselessly and stepped in, there stood Brent on the hearth rug, very white and tired-looking and still in his evening clothes from last night. His tie was twisted around, and his shirt and collar were crumpled. For an instant I thought he had been drinking, but I knew of course that that couldn't be true, so I thought he must be ill—and I hurried across the room to him. When he heard me speak his name he flushed and looked so embarrassed that I knew he was not ill, so for quite a long time we looked at each other in silence, neither knowing exactly what to say. And then, if you'll believe me, with the suddenness of a thunderbolt—I had my second proposal—under conditions even less romantic than the first. Think of

it, *two* in the course of twelve hours, and neither one in the moonlight underneath the stars!

Dear little Grandchildren, he thought I liked Bob! He said Bob had never seemed to care seriously for a girl before, and the thought that any girl could not care seriously for Bob never entered his poor jealous head! He thinks Bob simply wonderful. He's idolized him all his life, so he would have stepped aside and let Bob have me—if Bob had half a chance. That was what he meant to do—at least, until his heart ran away with him. He thought we lost him purposely last night, and he suspected that Bob was proposing to me, because I flushed when he came up—I didn't know that—and he spent the night there by himself in the library, forgetting to go to bed in his despair. He loves me, you see, little Grandchildren—he loves me—that big, grave, wonderful man! Isn't it too amazing to believe?

He did it better than Bob, too—the proposing, you know, or perhaps I didn't notice so carefully. The thing that mattered was that he *did* it, and I suddenly began to realize, somehow, that I'd always been hoping he would—as long back as I can remember. I didn't mind that it was six o'clock in the morning, or that I was in a kimono, or that he was in evening dress from the night before. I didn't mind that his linen was crumpled and his tie crooked and his hair tousled. I didn't mind *anything*, but that I had ceased being a little girl, and that his lips on mine had marked me for his mate—had made a woman of me. I knew instinctively that the crisis I had foreseen had come—that that instant was the fulfillment of things—the instant for which I had been made.

So I went into his arms with tears in my eyes, and we talked until the Duke came down at eight and found us there. When we told him, he insisted upon taking us both up to the Duchess's room, where the dear old lady took us into her arms impulsively, forgetting that her hair was in two stiff little braids, and that she hadn't even a bed

jacket over her nightie. Mother Goose and Father Goose know already, of course, because Brent told them before he brought me away, but we are going down to the flat to corroborate the news later in the day, after he makes up part of his night's sleep. Poor Bob has decided to go to Maine, anyway, but he congratulated us both and teased us before he went, and I've just received a mammoth box of Beauties and a dia-

mond bracelet with a card marked "Brother Bob."

So my silly schoolgirl dreams are all coming true, and I'm to live up to my nickname—"Duckling." "The Ugly Duckling" in the fairy tale married a prince, you know. Mine isn't a real one, of course, but he *seems* like one to me, and—

He's slept four hours now. I think I'll go and wake him with a kiss.



IN THE LAND OF PYRAMIDS

By BLANCHE ELIZABETH WADE

In
The country
Of old Madame Sphinx,
There exist stranger things than
One thinks. But the men of that land, they
Have plenty of sand, and so has each maiden who prinks.

This
Land is the
Home of the palm, and
Some kinds of spices and balm.
Each child of the Fates can tell by the
Dates the time of each battle and calm.

And
Speaking of
Palms, you must know,
There are more than one species
That grow. Oft a man of that land asks
A maid for her hand; so in palmistry they are not slow.

But
Many an old
Crocodile has tossed his
Huge head with a smile; for the
Young desert flirts sometimes get their
Deserts in the land of the Sphinx and the Nile.

I M M U N E

By ELLA WHEELER WILCOX

SELF-DRIVEN from the earth, a desperate soul
Was halted by the Angel at the gate.
“Dost thou not know the dark and fearsome fate
They earn, who dare rebel at God’s control,
And uninvited seek the final goal?”
(Thus spake the Angel) “Since thou wouldest not wait
The call each mortal hears, or soon or late
Thou must pass on, where fiery billows roll.”

The Soul made answer: “Unafraid I go.
Hell holds no terrors that I have not known.
For while on earth I lived to see the flame
Of love that once set all my world aglow
Fail, and die out of eyes that met my own,
Then leap to splendor when another came.”



T E A R S

By THEODOSIA GARRISON

TEARS in your brave, blue eyes—and tears for me!
Oh, child, I did not guess that man could be
So poor in love—so great in cruelty.

Tears in your brave, blue eyes, that day by day
Have smiled upon me confident and gay
Though all the hounds of hate were in the way!

Tears in your brave, blue eyes! I did not know
How well God arms his innocents, how low
In all abasement one who wounds them so.

HOW IT'S DONE

By J. STORER CLOUSTON

HERE are probably many well read ladies who live far from Park Lane and Belgrave Square who never go to Court, who visit no naughty country houses, who keep neither hunters, motor cars nor ladies' maids, who play bridge for penny points or none at all, but who nevertheless could pass a pretty stiff examination on the doings of their sisters in that enviable body, the smart set. The papers are so full of their engagements, marriages, portraits and exciting little scandals; the novelists give us such vivid and—no doubt—truthful pictures of precisely what would happen supposing we chanced to be born the daughter of a duke with a passion for gambling and a genius for dress, that there really is no excuse for ignorance of exactly how these divinities amuse themselves and their attendant marquises.

But there is one grave omission: we hear practically nothing about the serious side of their lives. "Are they serious?" someone may inquire. "Serious" is too feeble a term; they positively burn with intellectual ardor. They are the soul of every new movement; and in a successful season—when the Court keeps out of mourning and the weather remains fine—there are sometimes six movements a week. This truthful tale is written with the purpose of doing tardy justice to these strenuous and thoughtful ladies.

On an afternoon in May Mrs. Jack Kilrain stood in the drawing-room of her house in Hans Terrace, her brows a little raised, her lips a little curled. It was as natural she should stand as that the wind should blow. Such a tall and slender figure loses full half of its effect

when bent into angles, and an instinct for showing herself to the world as the world best liked to see her was not the least of Mrs. Jack's endowments. Her small face with its fine nose, thin, mobile lips and eyes now indolent, now bright, beneath their dark and piquantly arched brows, was poised to a miracle upon that graceful column. Above it all a ribboned basket of straw crowned a mass of auburn hair, the delight of artists. In a quick voice, smooth, perfectly assured and pleasant to hear in spite of its touch of something metallic—almost nasal—she observed carelessly: "How very roofo!"

To the uninitiated it may be explained that "roofo" was an addition to the English vocabulary contributed by Mrs. Jack herself. It signified anything that the speaker chose, and was interpreted by the hearer in whatsoever sense seemed appropriate at the moment.

Her caller rattled on:

"It is divine! Pitch dark—the weirdest noises—such an intoxicatingly disgusting smell—and the creepiest sensations all up your—all everywhere! Oh, my dear Helen, you must come and see him!"

Mrs. Jack's lip curled more emphatically. "In pitch darkness?" she inquired.

"I mean you must hear him. It would do you good, I'm sure."

Lady Franchard looked at her tall sister with an eye that burned enthusiasm. She herself, though shorter, had a lithe and delightful figure that filled an armchair entrancingly. The small face, the thin, expressive lips and the dark eyebrows showed a strong family re-

semblance to Helen's, but Lady Franchard's nose was inclined towards the retroussé, and her hair was of the brightest gold. She, too, was smart, modern and intellectual, though in all three respects less strikingly so than her sister. On the other hand, she had married a peer.

"It would do you good, Helen!" she repeated.

"Does he extract corns?"

"Artaxerxes extract corns!" cried Lady Franchard indignantly. "He is a materialized spirit, half Egyptian and half Pictish!"

"What a peculiarly tizzy thing to be!" said Mrs. Jack.

"Tizzy" was a sister word to "roofy," launched a season earlier, but in spite of the pace at which we live not yet quite obsolete.

It was Lady Franchard's turn to smile ironically.

"Not so tizzy as a roofy lecturer on the morals of logarithms, dear."

"Professor Mafia lectures on the metaphysics of logarithms," said Mrs. Jack coldly, though with an evident intention to wound by the mere correction.

"Does he do it with a magic lantern?"

Mrs. Jack's flush betrayed how the shaft had stung, for however frivolous she may be on worldly topics, your intellectual Amazon brooks no jesting on the subject sacred at the hour. For this reason her sister, too, was breathing quickly and her voice rang hard. But each lived in the world and had learned to tolerate even a mistaken enthusiasm.

"You had better come with me and hear him," said Mrs. Jack after a moment to cool her displeasure.

Her sister's face cleared, too. "This afternoon?" she asked.

"At half past three."

Lady Franchard reflected.

"Oh, hang it, I've got that dreadful Rhino at three. He never massages one under an hour and a half—that's to say not if you're anyways worth looking at. And he makes remarks in Russian to his parrot all the time—most ambiguous I'm certain they are. I hate the creature; but, then, if you don't go to

Rhino what is there to talk about? I mean among ordinary people."

"Mrs. Jack laughed. "I have to make my Labor canvass serve," she said. "You know I'm Honest Hoggin, the Sweated Tailor's chairwoman, don't you?"

"I heard you were disinfecting for something."

"It's a shocking bore; but I'm getting sick of bridge—it's such a very obvious thing to do. And one must do something."

"But surely, dear, going to lectures on the metaphysics of logarithms can't be a very amusing substitute. Personally I'd prefer Honest Hoggin."

Mrs. Jack grew serious. "It is good for one to be made to think sometimes," she said gravely, "and Mafia puts things in a way that appeals both to the soul and the intellect. Besides, it is so satisfactory to think that one is studying something that all these educated governesses and clergyman's daughter people have never even heard of. It keeps up the intellectual superiority of the governing classes. That's why the dear old Duke was so keen to lend us his drawing-room."

"And Patricia Selden presides, I suppose?"

"Of course."

"Well," said Lady Franchard, "if it comes to that, Artaxerxes has a duchess, too."

"We are nearly *all* duchesses," smiled Mrs. Jack. "You would envy my being a commoner, Ethel, if you saw how much more remarkable it makes me at Mafia's lectures."

"I am quite content to be what I am," said her sister. "Rhino took me at half-price just to use my name when he first came to Bond Street. Titles have become vulgar enough, heaven knows, but I'm thankful for anything that helps one to be economical."

Since Lady Franchard was currently reported to have lost five thousand pounds at bridge in the last six months and had just ordered a fourth car, her gratitude was natural enough. As she spoke she rose and glanced at the clock.

"Five to three!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, tizzy! I'll have to be off. By the bye, Helen, why not come with me to Artaxerxes's seance at five?"

"Sorry, but it'll take me the rest of the afternoon to copy out my Mafia notes."

"Good Lord, do you take notes? Well, anyway, I'm going to find out Artaxerxes's address and ask him to give a little seance in our library, so you'll be able to hear him mutter then. It's the most delicious sensation!"

Mrs. Jack was evidently struck with the idea. As a rule, of the two sisters it was she who showed the initiative, but she was never above taking a hint.

"What a roofofy notion!" she exclaimed. "I'll get Mafia to lecture here. What an owl I was not to have thought of it before!"

With this the sisters exchanged a sympathetic nod, and each set about satisfying her aspirations.

In the drawing-room of Selden House the forty-three disciples of Professor Mafia awaited their master in a hushed buzz of expectation. The number was made forty-three on the suggestion of Mrs. Kilrain, partly because—as they were able to assure themselves by the aid of a sheet of foolscap—it possessed the peculiar property of being indivisible, but chiefly because, so far as they knew, no other body of enthusiasts had ever consisted of precisely that figure. This greatly increased the originality of their performance, and, indeed, in the minds of many envious outsiders constituted its most astounding novelty. To attend a course of lectures on the metaphysics of logarithms was certainly remarkable, but it was nothing compared with the delicious notoriety of forming one of a mystic band of forty-three, four of whom were political duchesses, while only eight lacked a title of any kind.

"Lady Evangeline," whispered a sylph in green, bending toward the intellectual in front of her, "do tell me—what is a logarithm? I missed the first lecture, you know."

The Lady Evangeline—an austere dame in rusty black and spectacles—

turned with a smile whose amiability would have greatly surprised the Bishop, her husband, had he been unaware whom she was addressing.

"Oh, my dear Duchess," she whispered back, "don't you know? A logarithm is a—a—a kind of fraction, I fancy."

She slurred the last words rather hurriedly and in turn bent over the shoulder of a second duchess, and with her held a brief consultation. Then with a fortified mind she again addressed the young disciple.

"He hasn't got as far as that yet. This is only the third lecture, you know."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" sighed the duchess in green. "It handicaps one fearfully not knowing what words mean."

Mrs. Jack heard her with a compassionate smile. "I have been advising everybody to read Rumford's 'Principles of the Parallelogram' before they go any further," she remarked.

"Principles of the—what?"

"Parallelogram."

"What is that?"

"A figure."

"Of speech?"

Mrs. Jack hesitated. She had never had it put to her in exactly that way before.

"Practically," she answered.

"He mentioned parallel lines last time," said another of the forty-three. "Have they anything to do with it?"

This was not a duchess, and Mrs. Jack dismissed the suggestion with a touch of reproof.

"It seems to me that we had all better attend more to the metaphysical aspect."

"Oh, I quite agree with you," said the lady submissively. "It makes it much easier, doesn't it?"

"For that reason," observed Lady Evangeline over her shoulder, "I personally prefer the other aspect. We have scarcely come here to have things made easy, have we?"

An emphatic chorus of "No!" reassured her as to the intellectual strenuousness of the forty-three.

Meanwhile a dark red curtain

shrouded the end of the room in mystery. Like the indivisible number, this arrangement contributed not a little toward the unique success of the lectures, giving them in fact a dash of that romance associated with the stage. But now it divided silently and there stood revealed a platform, also hung with red, a large blackboard, a table with a glass of water, an assortment of chalks and a duster upon it—and beside the table Professor Mafia. It was not one of the least interesting features of this talented metaphysical mathematician that absolutely nothing was known to a soul of his birth, his past history, the diplomas or other qualifications which he unquestionably could produce if he would, or even his precise nationality. True, he spoke perfect English; but then what should one say of his dark and mystic name, or his equally foreign appearance? In stature he was above the average and in physique superb; an exceedingly well-fitting frock coat and dark trousers and a pair of the shiniest patent leather boots clothed him as far upward as the shoulders; nor did his immaculate collar and tie suggest the lands nearer to the sun. But above this the forty-three observed the dark mustache, the mass of waving dusky hair and the purple fez, that seemed to betray a kinship perhaps with the Chaldean star gazers. Taking him all in all, he seemed to them the properst person they had ever seen to discourse upon the logarithm.

"Ladies," he began, after the soft hum of applause had subsided, "today I shall first call your attention to the figure I propose to draw upon the blackboard."

And thereupon amid the profoundest silence he took a pencil of white chalk and very deliberately drew the figure. Evidently he did not yet consider his audience ready to confront the logarithm itself, since to the unversed eye it appeared to be nothing more recondite than an ordinary circle.

"Now," said he, "observe this introductory diagram attentively. What is it, and why is it? The latter question must be answered simultaneously with

the former, since we are here to deal not with the semblance, but with the heart of mysteries. The essence as well as the form, the shape as decidedly as the integument, must we place in the soul's thought tract. Furthermore, we must place them rather in front than backward or to the right hand or to the left. Where now should we place the symbol α in the figure I have drawn?"

He paused and looked inquiringly at his audience.

"Upon the circumference," suggested an ardent viscountess.

Gravely and gently the Professor shook his head; and forty-two intellects strove to recall some other mathematical term.

"The radius!" cried Mrs. Jack.

Again the fez moved slowly sideways.

"The center," said a duchess.

The Professor smiled approvingly.

"Your Grace is right. We shall place it there."

And in blue chalk that comprehensive symbol α was placed in the center of the circle.

"Thus far," he continued, "the way is clear, the significance obvious. But we are now confronted with an equation whose affinities obscurely, yet not inharmoniously, confront the investigator at the outset of his speculations. I shall symbolize it thus."

And within the space of five entralling minutes his audience beheld the solitary α develop into a string of cabalistic signs whose various colors they correctly divined to indicate corresponding metaphysical qualities. Now, they felt sure, was coming the most erudite and fascinating feature of Mafia's discourses, to wit, his excursions beyond the petty confines of mere mathematics into realms of speculation which, as he had convinced them all within ten minutes of the opening of his first lecture, were closely allied to logarithms and essential to the clear understanding of metaphysics.

"Observe, ladies," he resumed, "that I have placed this equation within a circle. That circle represents its environment. Before we proceed further

we must comprehend the inwardness of this phenomenon."

He drew a zigzag line with red chalk across one point of the circle.

"This represents the factor most potent in art and science, in literature and in life, the factor which without further preamble I may term sex."

He paused impressively, and you could have heard a pin fall in that drawing-room. They did, in fact, hear Lady Evangeline moistening the point of her pencil.

"Ladies, what is the most remarkable characteristic of sex?"

There was a pause, each intellectual seeming to shrink from expressing her opinion first.

"In all reverence and seriousness, ladies, I should like you to answer me."

Such an appeal was not to be resisted, and the Lady Evangeline in a grave voice replied:

"There is one of each, Professor."

"Perfectly true," said he; "but that is not all."

"Their clothes," suggested the popular wife of a recently ennobled capitalist.

He shook his head kindly. "Ah, the inwardness, the inwardness—we must not forget we are in search of that."

"Their souls," pronounced the Duchess of Selden.

"You are right, Your Grace. Ah, happily answered!"

"I must say," whispered Mrs. Jack to her neighbor, "he's a little sickening with his duchesses. No one else is ever right."

Yet even this grievance seemed to make her only the more respectfully attentive. And she enjoyed her reward, for a more interesting summary of this branch of mathematics could scarcely be imagined. Its intricacy and fascination may perhaps be judged by a short extract from the notes taken by Mrs. Kilrain.

"Two sexes—why not three—white circle explains reason—base nature of man—two blue crosses—look up Encyc. Britan—law should be altered—people often say that something ought—see Lady E's notes—ratios are —(?)—a

subliminal sense; this means, etc.,—all explained by trigonometry—lapse into sin—reason why—green triangle—we should not be too austere, because if one is, who knows what next, etc.—equation therefore means—these are not parallel—customs in Turkey."

No sooner had the last symbol been expounded and the curtain descended again upon the platform than she made her way to the Duchess of Selden's elbow.

"Where can I find Mafia?" she asked. "I want to see him particularly."

"The Professor? Oh, poor thing, he's had to rush off to some meeting or other."

"How disgusting of him!" cried Mrs. Jack. "You don't mean that he's giving these lectures to anyone else?"

"Heavens, no! He has to attend the committee of the—something or other physic or psychic or whatever it's called society."

But Mrs. Jack continued to pout.

"Give me his private address, will you, like a dear? I simply must see him."

The Professor had always laid such emphasis on his need for complete seclusion when not upon the platform that the Duchess hesitated. Yet, on the other hand, Mrs. Jack Kilrain was one of the leading spirits among the forty-three, an enthusiast whose zeal deserved some recompense.

"It's 51 Carruthers Crescent. It calls itself West, but it's really near the Harrow Road, I believe," she answered.

Even the audacious spirit of Mrs. Jack felt abashed as she waited in the drawing-room of 51 Carruthers Crescent for the advent of the philosopher. It was a small apartment furnished with white lace curtains, a square gilt-rimmed mirror and various other articles not to be found at Hans Terrace; and these were arranged with a symmetry which suggested that it served rather as a reception than a living room. Yet the very formality and absence of any personal equation, even in the engravings upon the wall, tended to increase the sense of mystery that sur-

rounded this remarkable man. She gave a little shiver and said to herself: "I wish he'd be quick!"

But when at last he entered, fez-crowned and frock-coated, her outward manner showed no diminution of its brisk assurance.

"Don't think me a nuisance, Professor!" she exclaimed. "I simply had to come and see you. I want you to give a little lecture at my house. I'll ask a few amusing people to meet you and that sort of thing. Will you?"

He looked at her gravely.

"I feel honored, Mrs. Kilrain, but my time—"

"Oh, but it will be a professional engagement, you know," she interrupted. "That's to say, I shall understand it as such; but *they* will consider you as my guest."

"Under those circumstances—" he began with a courteous smile.

"Oh, thank you so much. It's simply delightful of you. By the way, what are your terms?"

The Professor stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"It is a little out of my beaten path," he said at length. "And under such circumstances, of course—"

"Oh, they'd be pretty stiff, I suppose," said she. "On the other hand, you'll meet some useful people, don't you know."

Again he meditated; but before he could answer a maid came in with a card. He looked at it, and she observed a smile of satisfaction flicker for an instant beneath his dusky mustache.

"Inform the Countess of Franchard that I shall see her presently," he said in an aside which he contrived to make audible to his untitled visitor.

"Lady Franchard!" cried Mrs. Jack. "You don't tell me *she* is here?"

"She has just dropped in," said the Professor carelessly. "But pray do not hurry. Her Ladyship can wait for five minutes or so. Do you happen to know her, by the way?"

"My sister," smiled Mrs. Jack.

"Your sister!" cried Mafia, starting violently. "I had no idea of that, or I should never—"

He stopped and stared into space. Clearly this intelligence had confounded him.

"What in the world does she want to see you about?" she demanded.

"Her business I believe is somewhat peculiar—that is to say, private," stammered the Professor.

But his caller only grew the more curious. "Well, anyhow, I want to see her first."

Professor Mafia gazed at her doubtfully. Then, from the sudden gleam in his eye, he appeared to take a desperate resolution.

"Very well," said he, and touched the bell.

"Show Lady Franchard up here," he told the maid, and folding his arms awaited the event.

If Mrs. Jack had shown surprise on learning of her sister's visit, it was fully equaled by the astonishment of Lady Franchard on beholding Mrs. Jack.

"Helen!" she cried. "What—have you come round to Artaxerxes, after all!"

"Artaxerxes! This is Professor Mafia!"

"Ladies," said the Professor calmly, "had I known that you were related I should never have permitted either of you to learn the other's presence in my house. As it is, I owe you both a profound apology—and an explanation. In a word, my dear ladies, I have to confess myself something of a pluralist. It is not often that a disembodied spirit lectures upon logarithms, but in the progress of our civilization that consummation has actually been attained. I am Mafia the metaphysician; and I am also Artaxerxes the Picto-Egyptian Phenomenon."

The ladies exclaimed simultaneously.

"You have dared!" cried Lady Franchard.

"A mere quack!" cried Mrs. Jack.

"Pardon me," said the Professor unruffled, "I may have dared—for who can achieve without? But I distinctly disclaim the appellation of quack. A quack I take to be a person who professes to do what he is really incapable of accomplishing. Now I have under-

taken to supply the more accomplished ladies of our upper classes with the intellectual and spiritual excitement they demand. And have I not succeeded?"

"We do not demand more *excitement!*" said Mrs. Jack.

The Professor smiled benignantly.

"A woman cannot know what she wants, and yet remain charming, stimulating, divine. You think you want intellectual exercise; but what would the fair and gracious forty-three say to me if I actually lectured upon logarithms? I should deliver one lecture—and that would be all. Believe me, I have to exercise a far higher form of genius than if I really were a mere mathematician. No longer ago than last week I was requested by a lady of the highest rank and intelligence, in fact, the Duchess of—but her name does not matter. Well, as I was saying, I was requested by Her Grace to introduce if possible something about radium and the planet Mars into my lecture. As you may perhaps remember, I inserted the references not unskillfully."

"But this is dreadful!" exclaimed Mrs. Jack. "At least, you ought not to pretend to lecture on logarithms."

"What title could I choose that should leave me so free a hand? Ladies have such a wide smattering of knowledge nowadays that had I even selected Mezzotint or Aristotle I might have found among my audience some one who had once dabbled in engraving or Greek. No, I maintain my theme was excellently chosen."

"And do you mean to say," burst out Lady Franchard, "that your seances are faked, too?"

Artaxerxes, the disembodied, looked at her kindly.

"I never fake, Lady Franchard. Every sound you heard, every vision you saw, were actually sounds and—visions of a kind. I merely appealed to your imagination; and your imagination did not belie my confidence."

"But the idea of being *both* a spirit and something else as well!" cried Her Ladyship.

"One must live," explained the Philosopher.

"On us!" said Mrs. Jack with fine scorn.

"And do I not give you value for your money? Your intellectual aspirations have been more than satisfied—they have been intoxicated! And you, Lady Franchard, have you not enjoyed the sensations of a high church service accompanied by the satisfaction of doing the very latest thing devised for the destruction of boredom? Surely, surely, ladies, it is not for you to reproach me!"

Both ladies were evidently mollified by these considerations. Yet they looked at one another a trifle doubtfully.

"I don't quite know what one should say," said Mrs. Jack.

"I don't either," said her sister. "Of course—of course we can't keep on going to these—these things. I had meant to ask you to give a seance in my house, but now—"

Into the Picto-Egyptian's dark eye stole a curiously sophisticated gleam.

"It was not altogether without pre-meditation that I ventured to take you into my confidence," said he. "In fact, it occurred to me at once that I should thereby give myself the pleasure of placing you in a singularly advantageous position. I shall still be happy both to deliver a lecture and mutter a seance at your houses, but I certainly should not dream of doing so on a professional basis. In a word, your entertainments will cost you nothing beyond the refreshments."

He looked from one to the other, and in the air of each saw something to encourage him to proceed.

"On the other hand, you will perhaps feel inclined to make some special exertions toward increasing the number of ladies over whom you will now feel a certain secret sense of superiority."

The sisters exchanged a glance, and then Helen spoke.

"It's rather a rooky notion when one comes to think of it."

"Decidedly tizzy," said Lady Franchard. "Then you'll manage the seance all right?"

"And my lecture?" asked Mrs. Jack.
"I shall be charmed," replied the seer.

The sisters drove home together.
"How deliciously clever he is!" exclaimed Mrs. Jack.

Lady Franchard sighed her enthusiasm.

"And so interesting! I'm sure the creature has a past."

"He has a future, anyhow," said her sister; and then, after a moment's reflection, she added: "I'll get them to make the number fifty-seven."

"I wonder whether I could secure royalty for my seance?" mused Lady Franchard.



THE fool said one day in the King's presence, "I am the King!" And the King laughed, for he knew that his fool was wrong.
A week later the King was angry, because of an error he had committed, and exclaimed: "I am a fool!"
And the fool laughed, for he knew that his King was right.



CRAWFORD—I suppose you'll have a yule log, wassail bowl, Christmas tree and all the other things associated with the festive season?
CRABSHAW—No. I live in a flat, and the best I can do is a gas log, a bottle of prepared punch and a diminutive Japanese tree in a pot.



THE hobble skirt is making quite a stir, considering the entire absence of bustle.



THE woman of doubtful reputation never gets the benefit of the doubt.

A TRAGEDY DEFERRED

By FRANCIS PERRY ELLIOTT

THE girlish figure seemed to shrink.
"Is this the end?" she whispered falteringly.

His glance swept her coldly. "The end," he said shortly. "Be glad it is no worse."

"Worse!" Her eyes widened. "Oh, Harry, my husband, could anything be worse than to have you cast me out of your life?" Her hands reached toward him with a gesture timid, pathetic.

The man frowned, turning from her with a shrug. "It might be worse, I tell you!" he cut sharply over his shoulder. Then he halted in his stride, and though he did not turn, his voice came incisively, deliberately:

"If you are wise, Agnes, you will go."

In the pause her hands lifted toward his back and fell. She seemed to be struggling for words. His brow darkened as though he sensed the depth of her unvoiced protest. His tone when he spoke again seemed hardened to the temper of steel.

"You took your own path, and it lies —there!"

And in the pointing arm there was not a quiver.

"Oh, Harry!" And the girl dropped upon a chair, her head falling upon the arm thrown athwart the table. Her body quivered, but no sound came.

The man had wheeled, a scowl darkening his face. Now he strode swiftly toward her, his fist striking with sharp, metallic impact upon the palm.

"I've had enough of this, Agnes," he growled—"about all I care to stand!" He towered aggressively above her prostrate shoulders. Then his voice rasped sharply: "Are you going or not?"

A moan answered him and the little black figure contracted pitifully.

He leaned over her. "Do you want me to call the servants to put you out?"

She straightened with an air of pride, the tiny cambric in her hand touching her eyes the lightest.

"I'll go," she said, and rose.

She faced him reproachfully. "I should have thought, though, Harry, that you would have at least remembered that—"

She hesitated, but he angled toward her menacingly.

"Remembered what? Say it!"

She waited an instant, looking him over from head to foot. Her little chin lifted.

"That you were a gentleman, Harry," quietly.

His loud laugh, coarse and harsh, exploded in her face.

"Gentleman!" jeeringly. "Think you can rub it in, eh? Gentleman! You never thought me a gentleman—you know you never did. Don't lie—you know it!"

She shook her head slowly.

"But I loved you, Harry." It was said softly. "I always loved you, my husband—I do now. But you were so cold, so harsh, so—so rough with me. I had never been used to it. I suppose that was it—I don't know." She took a step toward him. "And I was so young—a girl bereft of father and mother. I—I knew so little. And when my aunt and those at home turned their backs upon me because I married you, I thought them cruel—but oh, Harry, I never knew how cruel they were!"

His bow was a gesture of smiling

A TRAGEDY DEFERRED

mockery. He sneered: "And so you went with a gentleman!"

Her head lifted. "I went with my dead father's friend."

His chest heaved and his voice waxed blusteringly. "You went because you loved him!"

She dropped back, leaning against the heavy library table, her hand above her heart.

"Oh, Harry!"

"Oh, Harry!" his voice mimicked. His lips worked and he struck his hand down hard upon the chair back. "Bah! Do you think I am a fool?" The sudden swing of his foot kicked the chair aside. He advanced upon her, hands raised, fingers curved and trembling.

The slight figure shrank far back across the table, and something like terror came into her face.

He laughed bitterly.

"Scared, are you—*afraid* of your beloved husband?"

Her eyes were widened, but her head moved a slow negation.

"I love you, Harry."

A snarl, and his fist lifted. "Stop! Stop your hypocrisy—or I'll—"

Her eyes held him steadily. Slowly his arm came down. He nodded. "Well, I did it once, you know!" The words came sullenly as he eyed her sidewise, scowlingly.

"I know," gently. "It was why I—I left you, Harry. Colonel Morton said I must." Her bosom heaved.

His eyes narrowed. "Oh, Colonel Morton said you must, eh?" He spoke tensely through his teeth. "Said you must leave your dear husband you loved so! And you obeyed him, of course. It wasn't any of your duty to obey your dear husband, was it?" Then quickening sharply: "Well, why didn't you stay with him? What do you come sniveling and whining here for?" Then his face lighted with a grin—derisive and malevolent, but fearsome. "Has he thrown you out—eh, is that it? A month of your pretty arts and blandishments was enough for him, eh?" The question was assured, triumphant.

"He does not know I am here. He would not have consented. The family

insist upon my taking my morning drive, and—"

"Drive!" Another mocking bow and arm sweep. "My lady has her carriage now—or is it a car?"

She went on evenly: "And I came to see you. Leila, his sister, does not know I am here—no one knows. I dismissed the carriage at the park and came up here, slipping into the house through the area. I was afraid to ring, afraid you had given orders—"

"You were wise, my lady!" His suave sneer was brutal.

She pursued: "I got in and up here. No one saw me."

"No one saw you!" The words came musingly as he looked off. Then his glance came back. He studied her thoughtfully. "Well?" he growled.

The sad little face brightened wistfully.

"There was something I wanted to tell you, Harry, something I thought you ought to know—something I was so happy over, dear, myself when I knew. It seemed to me that maybe if you knew, you—"

His finger-snap checked her. "Well, you can keep it!" The speech crackled rudely. "There's nothing, my lady, you can tell me I want to hear—understand that? *Nothing*, I tell you!" And he strode from her, dropping heavily into a distant chair.

"But, Harry, I—"

"Not a word!" he bellowed, as to a dog; and the gesture accompanying was imperative, final. He bit savagely at the cigar withdrawn from a pocket, eyeing her with a baleful sidelong as he lighted it.

Her fingers worked tremulously with the tiny handkerchief. She turned from him abruptly and he could see her shoulders move.

He laughed shortly, indifferently. "That's right; turn on the works. Thought it was about due next."

He threw one leg over the chair arm and studied her between puffs. "I say, Agnes, there is one thing you can do, though."

She turned quickly, inquiry in her eyes, her face lighting hopefully. He

was drawing a freshening blaze to his cigar, his eyes half closed, his face twisted in an ugly leer.

"Yes?" she whispered, and moved toward him, slowly, falteringly.

He chuckled, shifted back into the chair's depths, and grinned into space.

"Yes, Harry?" Her hand hovered above his shoulder now.

He crossed his legs, flicked the ash lightly to a tray, but never turned.

"I would like to know when you are going to divorce me."

"Divorce you?"

"Divorce me—yes, divorce!" impatiently. "Don't repeat me like a parrot. You heard what I said." His eyes glared up at her, then settled sulinely.

She laughed faintly. "Is that thought troubling you, you foolish boy? Why, Harry, dear"—a tender smile touched her lips—"did you think I would ever divorce you? That was the talk of others. I never thought of it an instant."

"You didn't?" Disappointment and rage succeeded in his face, but she could not see.

"Of course not." She leaned above him. "Don't think so meanly of me, dear. That is something you need never fear; not alone for your sake and my sake, but because now—"

She checked herself as though remembering and her lip dragged through her teeth. She bent lower, and in the stillness her words came softly, impressively: "It was for better or for worse, my husband—the bond is forever!" And her hand dropped lightly upon his hair.

For a moment he did not move, just staring dully before him, his lips moving inaudibly. Then slowly his hand came up until it rested upon hers. An expression of joy touched her face. With deliberation, his fingers slipped to her wrist, grasped it, and with an evidence of viciousness and hatred, flung it from him.

"Oh!" It was less a cry of pain than a sob as she recoiled.

He gave no sign of hearing her; he was looking straight ahead, his brow contracted in a frown, his lips moving as

though to the accompaniment of some dark, internal mulling. His fingers worked, contracting slowly into a clenched fist. The girl had moved away and was staring at him with wistful, frightened eyes.

"A bond forever!" The words came in a hissing aside, low but clearly audible. "*Forever*—and she means it!". He struck a downward blow hard upon his knee; but the staring eyes never changed. From out of his mutter four words breathed tensely, whisperingly:

"Then, what about Celeste?"

From the girl came an intake of breath—a sharp and poignant cry, instantly suppressed. It seemed to bring his attention back to her and he turned her way. A shrug and he got to his feet, moving slowly toward her with head advanced.

"So you heard? You understand, eh?"

A nod as she looked at him. Her hand came up and lay upon her lips as though to study them.

"And you won't divorce me—it's forever?"

No reply, but she retreated as he advanced. She seemed scarcely conscious of her own motion, but her eyes were steadily widening as under the suggestion of some waxing terror—something from which her senses recoiled, some dark horror with which her very soul was battling, crying its disbelief. And suddenly she screamed.

The man's shoulders hunched sharply; into his eyes came a sinister gleam; from his throat rattled a laugh—gurgling, satirical.

"Scream away, my lady!" He moved steadily nearer, "There's none to hear behind these walls and doors. I was bluffing just now about the servants. All were sent away yesterday when I moved over to the club. Scream once more, if you like; there's time for just once more!"

But the power of expression seemed to have passed from her and power of motion as well, save as she swayed pantingly against the table. And so he drew to within a yard, his elbows doubling, his long, tensile fingers shap-

A TRAGEDY DEFERRED

ing like the claws of a bird of prey. Then with a lightning dart, they swept to her shoulders, shifting upward toward the white neck.

But the touch seemed to break the spell that apparently had held her in thrall.

"No, no, no!" gaspingly. Her hands, clinging to his arms, seemed to check their progress. Then whisperingly: "Mercy! Not for my sake, Harry—it isn't that—but for—"

A growl for response, and the slender figure yielded backward above the table's edge before his straightening arms—yielded, but for an instant only. Then as though struggling under the impulse of some new-found strength, she swayed against the movement, her arms twisting, tearing, curving about his own.

With a snarl, he reached his right hand suddenly behind her to the table surface. His arm came up, his fingers clutching dagger-wise a heavy steel paper cutter of the poniard kind. There was a scream, a writhing twist that seemed to break the clutch of the single arm and she darted from him. But ten feet away, his hand fell upon her again, cat-like, whirling her about so that she lay back against his chest, her white face and heaving bosom from him, and upturned.

Standing thus, his dagger arm went back, as for the advantage of a long and powerful sweep. One instant the man's teeth gleamed behind her dark shoulder ere they were eclipsed by his arm, swinging the silvery circle that flashed toward her breast. But in that instant she seemed to throw her weight downward, slipping through his arm and falling to her knees free and clear, while the

blade, under the impulse of what seemed an unchanging drive and powerful inertia, came on, rocket-like, toward the point that had been its mark.

"That'll do!"

The voice, abrupt, incisive with command, cleft the darkness of the "house," somewhere there beyond the line of the canvas-shrouded boxes. The man's dagger arm dropped to his side limp and harmless. The girl on the floor relaxed composedly, her face alert, expectant.

"Too far up stage, Mr. Malcolm," said the Voice.

The man nodded, advancing with his arm crooked horizontally as a shield against the blinding line of footlights. He tried to glimpse, battingly, into the shadowy gulf cross-sectioned with sheeted orchestra rows.

The Voice went on: "A little too light there at the last, Miss Cheatham."

"Mr. Tompkins, I haven't the lines—I need more to carry it." The girl on the floor spoke with barrette between her teeth as she adjusted her hair. "Shall I 'fake' it?"

A grunt, as of assent, and the Voice came again, lightened with a touch of sarcasm: "And Mr. Malcolm, you are not clasping a delicate pearl necklace about Miss Cheatham's neck; you are trying to throttle the life out of her. See?" Then drily: "Just try to forget it happens to be Miss Cheatham's neck!"

The girl's brows lifted archly as her lithe spring brought her to her feet. The man's eyes touched her with a smile.

They were nice eyes, and kind.

"Second act," snapped the Voice. "Once more!"



HOMELY girls rush in under the mistletoe where peaches fear to tread.

THE PASSING OF PAN

By BLISS CARMAN

"**T**WAS Pan who loved a lady,
A lady who loved Pan,
And warmer love or wilder
Was never known to man.
He piped her such a music
As mortal never made,
Until her throbbing spirit
Grew strong and unafraid.

And then a mighty mission
Took possession of her mind,
To make of him a gentleman
Contented and refined.
So she took him to the city
And broke him to its noise,
And taught him to appreciate
Its luxuries and joys.

She made him go to business,
She made him read the news—
And never take his handkerchief
For polishing his shoes!
She made him use umbrellas,
She made him comb his hair,
And gave him pink pajamas
For his proper sleeping wear.

She taught him Christian usage,
Not to mumble while he ate,
And not to lick his fingers
With a napkin by his plate;
And not to wink nor whistle
At ladies in the street—
Though ardent and attentive,
To be timely and discreet;

THE PASSING OF PAN

And not to chase and terrify
 The nursemaids in the park,
 Nor sca e the nervous neighbors
 With his noises after dark,
 But observe the careful customs
 Of convention and restraint,
 Till he had, if not the morals,
 All the manners of a saint.

She tried to cure his habits,
 Of staying out at night,
 Of always contradicting
 Until he raised a fight,
 Of looking on the vintage
 Until his tongue was loosed,
 And chatting with the chorus
 Without being introduced.

But she was wise in loving,
 And sometimes let him be;
 And many of his failings
 She pretended not to see.
 And so in time she made him
 A very proper man,
 And that's the only reason
 There isn't any Pan.



R E T R O S P E C T

By MAUD A. BLACK

AN ebbing tide and a stormy sky,
 And the sea wreaths die on the shore;
 And the last dim light o'er the mountain height
 Fades—and the day is o'er.

O day, your promise was fair, so fair!
 O heart, your dreams were bright!
 But the dreams are fled, and the day is sped,
 And left me alone with night!

LA SONORENSE

By WALTER ADOLF ROBERTS

THE lights of the Café Gambrinus twinkled from the soiled white background of the wall that faced the street. Through the open doorway I caught a glimpse of the patio beyond, with its air of coolness, the vivid green of palms in pots and the round tables arranged with a sort of artistic irregularity upon the cement floor. Languid Mexicans sipped liqueurs and smoked innumerable cigarettes with a somnolent air, or stirred to life by some argument, generally political, leaned forward, thrust their fingers into each other's faces and chattered volubly for a few moments. In one corner of the patio a dozen Americans in white duck dined at a long table in lugubrious silence.

If you have been in Guaymas, you know that this Café Gambrinus is the one oasis in the barren desert of adobe houses that go to make up the town. It is here that the scandals of the day are raked over, the gossip of a bored white community repeated, to wile away hours that are usually wearisome. I had been in the Yaqui country for several months, and the lights seemed good to me. The duck-clad Americans suggested civilization and my mother tongue. Crossing the street, I entered and nearly stumbled over Hallam Vickers, who was sitting alone at a table immediately behind the door that led into the patio. He, too, if you are familiar with Sonora, will need no introduction. An Englishman of good family and unlimited means, he yet chooses to live the life of a remittance man in Guaymas, and has become very much of a fixture.

"Sit down," suggested Vickers quietly. "That is, if you care to. You

will be doing me a kindness. Haven't exchanged a word with a rational human being for three days. These railroad fellows are intolerable, and the only woman in town with whom one could rub two ideas has disappeared. Little Dickie Guy interfered and spoiled it all."

I took the chair opposite him. "You'll have to bring my knowledge of society events in Guaymas up to date," I said. "In the first place, who is Dickie Guy?"

"By Jove, that's so! You did not know Dickie. Canadian he was, from somewhere in the Maritime Provinces—Halifax, I think. Nice little chap and all that, but I made the mistake of introducing him to La Sonorense, and he took it too seriously, or she did—it does not matter which."

"You forget," I told him, "that La Sonorense is only a name to me. I've heard of her often enough—we all have in the back country—but if I am to understand the story you'll have to tell it to me from the beginning."

"La Sonorense is a product of conditions," said Vickers slowly, as he lighted a fresh cigar. "As you probably know, she used to dance in the little theater here, and that fact was sufficient to shut her out from the precious *blanco* society that prides itself on preserving the traditions and conventions of Spain. Most women cannot rise superior to a situation of that kind. But La Sonorense is clever and a born hostess. She became the center of a social circle of her own, established a sort of tropical salon, you know, and we lonely *gringos* were the ones to benefit by it."

I nodded. "Go on," I said.

"Little Dickie Guy came down here

from Vancouver and San Francisco about four months ago," said Vickers. "He was an architect and had the job of designing the station houses on the new railroad. Nice gentlemanly work, you know. It sounded impressive and lent weight to some letters of introduction he had brought with him from San Francisco. Anyway, he was able to meet the best Mexican families in Guaymas, a thing which a railroader very seldom gets the chance to do. He was received at the *casa* of the De Iturbides among other places, and fell head over ears in love with the eldest girl, Mercedes. She was a beautiful creature, pure Castilian features, olive complexion, black hair and eyes—you know the type. He proposed marriage and was accepted, and as he was up at the *casa* every night after that, we thought we had seen the last of him about town.

"However, one evening before the engagement had been publicly announced, he dropped in here and asked me to take a drink with him. We sat at this very table, I think.

"'Vickers,' he said, leaning over and tapping me on the arm, 'I want to meet La Sonorense.'

"I laughed in his face. 'Don't do it,' I advised him. 'She is popular—Oh, very popular—and all the *gringo* world pays her homage, but they don't think very highly of her in the Iturbide set. If Señorita Mercedes were to hear that you had visited La Sonorense, she would never marry you, my boy.'

"'I know it,' he answered—'but how will she ever hear it? A dancer at the Teatro Cómico and a hostess who ignores the conventions of Spanish society—Mercedes would neither speak of such a one nor allow anybody to mention her name. But why should I not know her? They say she is the most brilliant conversationalist in Sonora, and of none of the people I meet at the Casa Iturbide could that be said.'

"I did not argue with him further. It was his own affair. La Sonorense preserved certain standards of her own, and Dickie measured up to them. He was white and a gentleman, so, after all, he had the right to know her. 'Do

you want to go tonight?' I asked. 'At once,' he said; and I took him by way of the Avenida Siete to the little house behind the plaza—that's empty now, worse luck!"

Vickers paused abruptly. He drummed with his finger tips on the table and puffed steadily on his cigar. "Come this way," he said at last. "I want to show you something that may help you to follow this yarn a trifle better."

He rose and lounged across the patio with an air of infinite boredom, while I followed close at his heels. The Café Gambrinus consists of the main building and two wings. On the fourth side the patio is inclosed by a high wall broken only by a doorway and two iron-barred windows set breast high in the cement work. At one of the latter Vickers paused. He opened the shutter halfway, and we found ourselves gazing into a narrow street flanked on the opposite side by low, flat-roofed adobe houses to which the moonlight imparted a tone of silvery softness. In the street were patches of shadow, black and impenetrable.

"That is the rear of the Hotel México," said Vickers, pointing to a wall that towered above the surrounding structures to the left. "Below it is the *casa* of La Sonorense. There is a light in one of the windows."

As he spoke the light gleamed more brightly. A Mexican swung back the shutter and stepped out onto the balcony, and presently the faint tinkle of a mandolin reached us.

"It is Felipe, the caretaker," said Vickers. "He opened the door the night I took little Dickie Guy round. La Sonorense was seated in her reception room, alone, for a wonder, and I'll never quite forget the figure she cut when she came forward to greet us. It was as though she had dressed specially for Dickie's benefit, and I saw that he was tremendously impressed. She wore the short skirt of a ballet dancer, black spangled with gold, and a black bolero jacket slashed with yellow silk. And then her face, clean cut and well bred, but with sensuous lips and a chin almost too prominent and aggressive for a

woman. To crown it all, she had her hair done in a sort of Grecian style, with a black velvet band across her forehead and a huge red rose behind her ear. Put these different points together and you may be able to construct the picture for yourself. For my part, I can see her as clear as daylight as she came across the room, passionate and beautiful, and suggesting at one and the same time some pagan goddess and a panther ready to spring upon its prey.

"She ignored me almost completely. I muttered some words of introduction, but she went straight past me and took both of Dickie's hands in hers. 'I knew you would come sooner or later,' she told him. 'You are the only Americano in Guaymas who pretended to despise La Sonorense, but no one can do that for long—is it not so?'

"Dickie had his eyes glued on her, and I really forgot what answer he made. It was of no importance, anyhow. He looked her up and down; a flush mounted to his cheeks and stayed there. He was very little taller than she was, and they made a splendidly matched pair. I was sorry for my own sake that I had ever let him know her, for I saw what was coming.

"I have told you that this woman was clever. She was not merely a ballet dancer; and the manner in which she entertained us that evening would have put many a hostess in London or New York to shame. She read the Spanish and French reviews, and could talk brilliantly about what was going on in the world of literature and art. Also, she was a musician of great ability. She sang Spanish folk songs to her own accompaniments, and when she had almost worked us up to the point of making fools of ourselves over some blamed pathetic little thing, and Dickie interrupted to say that he would like to teach her a Canadian song, she caught the point at once.

"'Yes, I know,' she told him, dropping into broken English. "'The Maple Leave for Evaire,' dat is noble, magnificant, and it does not make you want to cry, as my songs do. A *gringo* must nevaire show that he has a heart, and he

must nevaire forget that he is a *gringo*; and she ripped out the Canadian anthem until Dickie was ready to fall at her feet and worship her.

"I did not remain long. It gives one no end of a chill to realize that he is no longer wanted in a place where he has always been greeted with open arms. So I cleared out and came back to the café here. Drank seven whiskey-and-sodas, I think, and was turned out at about two in the morning by our good friend Gambrinus. Small blame to him. I was the only customer left in the place, and he had already kept it open for my benefit alone for over an hour."

The diners in the patio behind us were silent. From the street, the only sound that broke in on the low drawl of Vickers's voice was the distant tinkling of Felipe's mandolin. A land breeze, faint and warm, puffed lightly against our faces, and for a moment my attention was distracted by the figure of a peon that moved slowly from one patch of shadow on the street, crossed a strip of moonlight and was swallowed up in another shadow darker than the first.

"Go on," I remarked, after a pause of several minutes. "Did she win him away from Mercedes? No one could withhold her heart's desire from the woman you describe."

"I am coming to it," said Vickers. "The many visits that Dickie paid after that first evening to the *casa* of La Sonorense are hardly worth mentioning. To tell the truth, I was present on only two or three occasions, and was made to feel such an outsider that I rather avoided the house when I knew he was going to be there. She was in love with him—I could easily tell that; and he—well, he was fascinated, and hardly the master of himself, though whether he ever grew to love her I do not know.

"The climax came one evening two weeks ago. I went round rather early. Felipe let me in, but said La Sonorense had not yet returned from the theater. He showed me into the parlor, and I thought myself enough of an old friend to make myself comfortable and wait for her. At one end of the room was an alcove containing a lounge. The latter

was concealed by a curtain made of split reeds, cool and airy, you know, but sufficiently heavy to serve as a screen. I lay down there, and in a short time dropped off to sleep. The sound of that extraordinary woman's voice awakened me. She was speaking rapidly, in tones soft as the purr of a cat, yet so clear that I did not miss a word.

"The love of a woman is a dangerous thing to arouse," she was telling someone. "You have made yourself the light of my life, and now I cannot let you go."

"I hate eavesdropping, and was about to let her know I was there, but the scene that met my eyes as I raised myself on my elbow stopped me short. Dickie was standing in the middle of the room. His lips were pressed into a narrow line, and some tremendous mental struggle had made a wreck of his face. La Sonorense was on the ground at his feet, her arms clasped about his knees. She was pleading with him, her head thrown back, her lips and eyes making a voluptuous appeal.

"I tell you that you must not leave me," she went on. "No one has ever gained the victory from me in the battle of love, and now that it is I that love, think you I shall allow myself to be defeated?"

"Her assurance was superb, and for a moment Dickie seemed to yield. Heaven knows, I could never have resisted her for one short moment. But the boy must have had a will of iron, and he had not lived long enough in this country to throw the traditions of his caste overboard. He stretched out his arms as though to embrace her, then drew them back with a sharp decisiveness.

"No!" he cried harshly. "I have said my say, and before God, I mean to stick by it! I love the woman I have promised to marry—love her, do you hear? I was a fool ever to come near you, and perhaps you can wreck her life by telling her all that has happened. If that is the price I must pay, I will pay it, but I will never make you my wife."

"And is it really so?" said La Sonorense, with an infinite and caressing softness. She rose to her feet, and whipped

out a dagger from the folds of lace upon her breast. She gripped his shoulder with her left hand and threw her right with the weapon high into the air above her head. He was 'covered' as effectively as though a revolver had been pointed at his heart, for no movement he could make would be quick enough to prevent the blade from being driven into his back.

"The Blessed Virgin knows that I love you," she said, "but I would sooner see you dead than the husband of another. Choose! Either you take the love that I offer you, or I kill you first and then myself. The pang of death will be over quickly, but not the suffering that would be mine if you ever lay again in that woman's arms."

"Possibly you may wonder that I did not interfere. My first impulse was to do so, but I realized how utterly futile it would be. She would have heard my slightest movement and killed him as surely as I am standing here talking to you tonight. As it was, he had a chance to buy his life.

"I think that the boy was horribly frightened for a few minutes. He knew that he was looking into the very eye of death, and in spite of all the heroics that have been written about situations of that kind, I don't believe that anyone faces cold steel or a bullet without fear. One may hide it, choke it down, and that is what Dickie did. His face went white to the lips, and he could not speak for a second or two; but he kept his nerve, and when he answered her his voice was steady enough.

"When I was in Canada," he said, "we caught a horse thief on the border, a man with blood on his hands, who knew that if he were brought to trial he would surely hang. We were seven strong, and with seven guns pointing at his heart, do you know what he did? He asked for time to smoke a cigarette; and when I told him to go ahead, he took one from his pocket and lighted it as quietly as though he were sitting at a café table. He smoked it about half-way through and thought hard all the while. Then he laughed in our faces, threw his shoulders back and reached

for his gun. He was dead before his hand touched the holster. He had decided that it was better to fall in his boots under the open sky than to suffer the agony of trial and death by the rope. Well, I am like that man, but I do not want even the time to think. If you are going to kill me, do it quickly.'

"The subtlety of that appeal was tremendous. It was so absolutely different from anything that one of her own people would have said. It cooled her fury, and I saw her wilt before the iron of the Northern temperament that enabled this boy to defy the death that he feared.

"Do you then hate me so much," she cried, "that you would sooner die than have me for your own? Many men would have given their souls for the thing I am throwing at your feet." She drew back from him, but every nerve was still tense, and I saw that at any moment she might spring at his throat once more. "Who is she?" she asked suddenly.

"I will not tell you," said Dickie. As he spoke, his hand went instinctively to his breast pocket, and slow as I usually am in such things, I think I caught the significance of the movement as quickly as did La Sonorense. The color flamed to her cheeks. She bit her lip, then darted straight at him.

"Just how it happened I do not know, but the next moment she held in her hand a photograph wrapped in tissue paper. It was the first real victory she had gained, and when Dickie made as though he would take it from her, she menaced him with her dagger.

"I will know!" she cried, and tore the covering from the picture.

"The whole affair seems very unreal to me, now that I am telling it to another person," said Vickers in the languid drawl that he had preserved throughout. "You may balk at be-

lieving this, but it is the truth that when La Sonorense looked at the face of Mercedes de Iturbide staring at her out of the picture she threw her arms above her head as though she had been stricken with a mortal wound. The dagger clattered to the floor, and presently she followed it, dropping to her knees, holding out her hands and screaming shrilly, appallingly. Felipe came running in, and of course I joined them. We tried to make her lie down on the couch, but the woman had the worst case of hysterics I have ever come across, and we could not move her. It was half an hour before we got her to drink a little brandy and so far gain control of herself as to give no sign of emotion, except an occasional moan through her clenched teeth.

"After what seemed a great while she opened her eyes and looked at us. She did not appear to be surprised at seeing me there, and I do not think she even realized the presence of Felipe.

"Deeckie," she said, using most incongruously, as I thought, her broken English, "go now and leave me. You have broken the heart of La Sonorense, and you s'all nevaire see me again. Tonight I go to Mazatlan, or to Mexico City—it does not matter which—all places are alike to me now. But it is well that you should know why I leave you to another. Did the woman you love nevaire speak of Inez, a leetle girl she loved in days gone by? No, I think no. She hates the memory of Inez, because she could not live the life of her people. She ran away to be a public dancer, to win the applause of the world, to play with the hearts of men.

"Deeck, I am that Inez—Inez de Iturbide. And Mercedes is my sister."

Vickers threw away his cigar. "That's about all," he said. "Come; I'm thirsty."



THE MAGNATE'S DICTIONARY

By STUART B. STONE

THE SENATE—A very desirable social organization located in the Capitol at Washington. The membership being restricted to two from each State, and the initiation fees running well into the tens of thousands, the Senate is probably the most exclusive club in America. Closely affiliated with the Malefactors', Undesirable and Ananias Clubs.

THE PEOPLE—A clamorous, inquisitive herd inhabiting the Incorporated States of America and overgiven to brooding about cost of living and the man higher up. Synonyms—*hoi polloi*, marks, masses, consumers. For the only adequate measures for handling the people, see Commodore Vanderbilt's "Heart-to Heart Utterances of a Nabob."

LAMBS—The golden-fleeced species whose propagation and slaughter has been found so profitable in the club circles above mentioned.

WALL STREET—The deep, shady cañon into which the lambs are lured for the removal of the golden fleece.

OCTOPUS—A coy, tentacular animal, the breeding of which has also proved eminently profitable to many of our best families. The octopus formerly infested the North Jersey suburban district, but recent upheavals and outbursts in the vicinity of Trenton and Newark have tended to frighten the brood over the border.

MEMORY—A mental faculty of extreme usefulness in early life in the formation of mergers, combines, squeezes and corners, but capable of being conveniently laid aside when the prosecuting attorney shouts menacingly: "Where'd you get it?"

LAWS—A compilation of a nation's humor. Among the choicest bits to be found in the American anthology are "The Constitution," and "The Anti-Trust Law," by J. Sherman.

ON REMAINING YOUNG

By REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN

FESTIVALS were devised for youth. After twenty, nobody enjoys Christmas, except in making other people enjoy it. This I have known for twelve years, and now I find myself upon a further discovery: that, after thirty, New Year's Day is not so much a promise of good things to come as it is a reminder that a man must hurry if he is to get the best of the good things that preceding New Year's Days promised him.

Is this a symptom of the disease that we call "modern life"? I think it is. I think that our great-grandfathers did not feel as we do. I think time was more kindly to them. And I think that I have found the reason why.

When we were all boys and girls together, which is to say in the days of small shops and large farms, of fewer schools and more schooling, of ideals that were unachievable and achievements that were to all appearances ideal—in those days there used occasionally to be caught a word that declared that men and women had lost the art of growing old gracefully. It was, indeed, generally agreed that they had lost it, and we younger people—for we were the younger people then—were given vaguely to understand that it was a sad deprivation.

Now all that is over. Our generation has lost even the sense of loss. Not only do we not grow old gracefully; we do not grow old. We live among deeds so intently that we forget facts, among actions so rapaciously that we escape thought. We do not grow old; we commit only the bourgeois banality of growing middle-aged.

It used to be the easiest thing in the

world to grow old. All that you had to do was to fold your hands and wait. But now it is a curiously conscious and painfully intellectual process of which most of us are wholly incapable. Where are the old lavender ladies in lace caps, the old ladies with delicate folded hands and faces calmly sweet of whom our fathers told us? Where the white-haired gentlemen who quoted Horace over their morning bacon and greens and reread their school Virgils in the sunset of their peaceful lives? The snows of Villon's yesteryear are not more utterly vanished.

As brief a time ago as 1842—good heavens, did you say that was nearly seventy years since?—M. Quersonnières was celebrating his one hundred and fourteenth birthday. "My family," he boasted, "descends from Methuselah; we must be killed to die; my maternal grandfather was slain by an accident at a hundred and twenty-five, and I invite you to my burial in the next century." He made his exit, it is true, somewhat earlier than he had expected, but there had been those whose hold upon life might well have justified his hope. Less than half a century before his passing, one Henry Jenkins, of England's Newington, had reached the age of a hundred and sixty-nine, following the hard trade of fisherman for the last four score and ten years of his life, and his contemporary, William Farr, died only forty-eight years his junior.

But the dean of all these Ajaxes that defied time's lightning was that sturdy Shropshire lad, Thomas Pass, who would not quit this world until in 1635 he had had a hundred and fifty-two years of it. Whether this endurance was due to his

habitual menu of bread and milk, cheese and whey, or whether it was reinforced by that appetite which drove him in the dead of night from bed to buffet, the great Harvey, who examined his heart and found it abnormally fat, has failed to tell us. But Thomas at least preserved his mind from the disillusionments that are popularly believed to come with years. He had little in common with his patron saint; he married his first wife at eighty-eight and became a father, and married once more at a hundred and twenty. In all things, in fact, he retained in age the impulses of youth, for when he was presented at the court of Charles I and there made much of, it was the high living that killed him.

Upon the testimony of such witnesses alone it may be argued that, save for fisherman Jenkins, they achieved age because they attempted nothing else; that they grew old because, somewhat after the manner that Stevenson suggests, they devoted their lives to it. Nevertheless, years have not always been an essential obstacle to activity. If it is urged—as I heartily agree—that Julius Cæsar, though he had scarcely seen a camp until he was forty-nine, was yet a young man at that beginning of his military career, or that John Quincy Adams, entering the House of Representatives at sixty-five, was at the best age to shoulder the business of law making, what are we to say of Palmerston following the barbarous hounds or taking a regular afternoon gallop of ten leagues at the age of seventy? Sir William Herschell, who did not discover Uranus until 1781, was at eighty too busy observing the heavens from the earth to think of taking a journey to them, and John Wesley, who at the same age was quickening the evangelical spirit in the Church of England by riding between four thousand and five thousand miles in a twelvemonth, wrote at eighty-two: “It is eleven years since I have felt any such thing as weariness.”

The truth is that, for whatever reason, our modern life wears out the body more swiftly than even the life of two generations ago, and we feel it most at holiday

time. The Day of Old Men was hurried to its close by the unnatural breaking of the Day of Young Men, and now that the day of young men cruelly forced is ended, now that most of our “Young Napoleons of Finance” have been shipped to their St. Helena, and most of our “Young Captains of Industry” are once more working for a living, there has dawned the Day of the Middle-Aged. We shall protest against it. The census will show some of us declaring that we are no older than we were a decade ago; we shall still go about singing “Backward, Turn Backward, O Time in Thy Flight”; but we all know in our hearts that these last ten years have aged our bodies a full score.

Is this fatality of middle age inevitable? I, for one, agree with the morning star of patent medicine advertising: “There is hope.” The bones may harden and the muscles soften; the hair may whiten sooner, and Herbert Spencer may have been justified in his belief that vaccination must shortly rob us early of our molars; but the conditions that affect these mere habiliments need in no wise harm the spirit that those habiliments enfold. Better than in any time preceding, in this time of the railway and the telegraph, of newspapers a plenty and magazines a legion, of libraries and Andrew Carnegie, may we keep the mind young.

The prolongation of infancy is in every scale of animal life an evidence of evolutionary advancement. In the Paris of the fourteenth century, a time when careers were particularly liable to accidental cessation, it was calculated that the average duration of life was not above seventeen years, and it therefore behooved one to develop early. In fact, in all ages before our own, when the fit few survived and ruled by right of years, men were like Timour the Tartar, who bragged that his hair turned gray in the cradle.

Were we not at school taught to believe that Mahomet acquired in youth the mature science of silence—which he later so admirably forgot—and was given the wealthy Mistress Kadidjah for his reward? We learned

that the boy Milton always studied until midnight. Gibbon told us that at sixteen he "weighed the systems of Scaliger and Petavius, of Marsham and Newton," and even that his "sleep was disturbed by the difficulty of reconciling the Septuagint with the Hebrew computation." It was a very young Louis XIV that, in riding boots and whip in hand, entered his surprised parliament and took to himself the task of driving it. The Lafayette that first offered his aid to our colonies was but nineteen; and, in spite of the wicked Sophia's endeavors to keep him an ignoramus, the little Peter of Russia asked enough questions early to insure himself the title of the "Great."

Those were the precarious days when they that grasped age could rule youth, and when they that grasped it held it prettily. A hundred years ago the statisticians had it that only fifty of a hundred individuals lived to be twenty. It was the Day of Old Men, when infancy was shortened and when age was made beautiful in precisely the manner in which we secure the perfection of the American Beauty rose. But now! My gentle alumnus, consider last autumn's entrance examinations, and tell me whether you could pass them. It is a time for the class of 1900 to sit at the feet of 1915. Within five years the freshman will begin where the graduate ended.

It is true that, as surely as it ever did, "youth the dream departs": but it is equally true that youth the fact may be retained. Indeed, though youth as a not necessarily transitory element is excellent, youth as a time is tremendously overrated.

Far from being the savings bank that Sophie Swetchine said it should be, youth is a gambling house wherein, as in all well regulated gambling houses, the chances are heavily against the player. Even Aristotle was a dissipated boy whose flirtations, to call them by no harder name, were as much like the sands of the sea as those of Lucian's Theomestus. Wordsworth's "bland composure" of youth was better expressed by Voltaire when he said: "Il

saut, pour la jeunesse, être un peu complaisante." It is the period of adventure, but it will not take the trouble to understand its adventures; it is the hour of experiment, but it depends upon the afternoon of age to codify its experiences. If it judge at all, it judges the whole by the part. "At twenty-two," says Mr. Howells, "one is often much more secure and final in one's conclusions than one is afterward." To all things ultimate, youth is as blind as Humboldt's *guacharo*. When Walpole accused Pitt of being "a clever lad," the charge was no light one, and you have only to grow old to know it.

As long ago as our childhood, we were taught on Sunday that De Soto's "fountain of youth," of which we had read at home, was nothing desirable. Learning to be men, we learned that we would not always wish to be boys. Emerson, declaring that "the surest poison is time," was a slave to the tradition that the worth-while pleasures of youth passed away when youth passed. In his better moments no man saw more clearly that what was worth while might be retained.

But what may be retained is of the mind only. Few things are more grotesque or pitiable than the man who clings too desperately to the youth of his body. Business and professional conventions decree that doctors and lawyers must never acknowledge to a year less than thirty, that stenographers and manicures must never own to a day above twenty-eight. These are the bearded and the marcelled trades; but outside of them the man that swears to a youth long past is as ridiculous as the vaudeville "infant prodigy" in his tenth theatrical season, as wearisome as those political "boy orators" that refuse to grow up.

Gentle as I would be with my sisters, when I find that one of them has voluntarily lied to me about her age, I suspect her of all possible deceptions. If her years are false, why not her hair and teeth? If she is mendacious about her birth, I doubt her figure and her integrity. We say politely that such women are "of a certain age," meaning

ON REMAINING YOUNG

that they are of an age uncertain. In France, however, they manage these things better. There women are not so tender of such secrets, and they are wisely pronounced "*femmes d'un âge raisonnable.*"

Even in Anglo-Saxon countries, that is, in all other respects, woman's most reasonable period. In considering débutantes we can be sure only that the girl who buds early will generally blow late, but we can count upon the grass widow to make hay while the sun shines. We are certain that the "*âge raisonnable*" will not confuse attentions with intentions, and yet few of these women can wholly be trusted with their years. Most belles of forty are not so bad as they are painted, but every one of them assumes male ignorance of the fact that all is not young that titters. Queen Elizabeth playing the coquette on the brink of the grave was no whit better than Constantine the Great changing the color of his wig from day to day, the cut of his garments from hour to hour. Like Adelaide in "*Desperate Remedies*," she, "when in company with a younger woman, always leveled herself down to that younger woman's age from a sense of justice to herself—as if, though not her own age at common law, it was in equity." On the other hand, when a woman tells you her real age—but then she never does.

The dyed and painted old men, the "doting dizzards," as Burton calls them, who always speak of their contemporaries as "the boys," and of women with an even greater familiarity—these are a spectacle scarcely more pleasant. "Then," said Cicero to one of them, who decreased his age by several years, "when you and I were at school together you were not yet born." They hold fast to the youth of their body with bleeding nails, and their terror ages what intellect was vouchsafed to them. They have fallen into their second childhood immediately upon emerging from their first, and youth itself cannot contemplate them in their make-up without wondering what the weary, leering satyrs must resemble when they go to their dressing rooms and hide for the night.

No, the garments of youth wear speedily shabby. Foppery and finery, we must pack them in the cedar chest. And worse than this: the affection of the early years will mellow with the later, but new love we must deny ourselves.

This is one respect in which "revolving time" has not altered the opinion of wisdom. Love is like the measles: the older the patient, the worse the case; and of all old men Chaucer's "old, unholsome and myslved man" is the one most open to infection. From the last days of Sophocles when he wooed Archippe, to those when the venerable Fontenelle sighed to the young woman that pleased him: "Ah, madame, if I were but fourscore again!"—from then until now, though

*Amplexus suos fugiunt pueræ
Omnis horret amor Venusque Hymenque,*

industriously "the Devil himself makes such matches." Ecclesiasticus and Seneca, Tully and Plutarch, St. Ambrose and St. Austin—they all inveighed against the wedding of May with December. Even Tiberius, who was not always hypercritical, made a law forbidding it, and, for my own part, in our own time, while I hold it a foul thing for an old man to marry a young woman, I hold it more foul for the courts to sanction such a ceremony and for the clergy to perform it.

Solon, when his friends warned him that he was incurring the tyrant's vengeance, and asked him on what he trusted, seeing that he went to such unprecedented lengths, replied, "To my old age"; and old age is indeed not without its consolations. Restif complains: "Why should we wish to grow old, since the evening of life is to be obscured by so many ills?" But "Monsieur Nicolas" had a spirit so much lesser than the angels that one would scarcely expect him to agree with Walpole that this same evening "is no such uncomfortable thing, if one gives oneself up to it with a good grace, and doesn't brag about it." Goethe was nearer the mark when he said that a man needs only to pass beyond maturity "to become gentler in his judgments—I see no fault that I

could not have committed myself." It is, then, the youth of the mind that we can retain with dignity and may temper with experience. Apollo is never old, and all men have in them enough of Apollo to be worth saving. It is in the art of that salvage that there lies the secret of remaining young.

The quality that makes youth lovable is the quality that makes lovable old age. You will not find it, now that it has escaped you, unless you heed Thoreau's warning against hurry; you will not approach it unless you remember Schopenhauer's counsel against boredom; you will not overtake it unless you attend upon Jean Paul's plea for the enjoyment of consciousness; you will not recognize it when you have caught it unless, unlike Buffon's oak, the years have not hardened your heart. In the oldest book in the world, in the "Precepts of Ptah-Hotep," the Egyptian, it is written: "He is a blameworthy man that makes a bad use of his moments"—the more blameworthy, I may add, when those moments are recognizably fewer than they used to be.

"Madame," said the physician at the death bed of the aged mother of the Rothschilds, "I cannot save you, for I cannot make you young again."

"Monsieur," replied the lady, "I do not wish to be made young; I wish only to be permitted to continue growing old."

'Tis not for nothing, Death,
I sound out you and words of you, with daring
tone embodying you
In my new democratic chants—keeping you for
a close,
For last impregnable retreat—a citadel and
tower,
For my last stand—my pealing, final cry.

Remember these things. Remember that it is not only the dead that never grow old. Remember that Swedenborg teaches that, in Heaven, to grow old is to grow young. Remember—and then you will be able to follow my prescription.

I wonder if I ought to publish that prescription? If I made a secret cult of it, it would certainly make me richer than ever this talk about it will. Women would recall me as soon as they began to forget their birthdays; they would ask initiation when they discovered the first gray hair or announced the engagement of their eldest daughters. The clubman would seek me when he found a youth in his favorite chair at the smoking room window; the householder when he refused new slippers because he could not get his feet into them so easily as into his old ones; the business man when he commenced to dislike new methods; the politician when he saw "the menace of Socialism" in every piece of remedial legislation. There would come the clergyman too keen upon heresies, the lawyer too fettered to precedent. The man in the street would consult me when he began to distrust novelties, and the editor when he rejected my manuscripts. Most of us die before twenty or after sixty, and that makes forty long years when we have to live together. Nearly all of us agree with Gibbon that "it is the common calamity of old age to lose whatever might have rendered it desirable"; surely, then, the many should be willing to pay a pretty figure for the secret.

On the whole, I think I shall make a cult of it.



MR. BAKER—Did you enjoy telling Barker about your new machine?
BAKER—No, confound it! It developed that he had just bought one himself.

ME AND MINE

By EDNA C. IRWIN

A HEART poured forth to the cup of love,
As we pour a bumper of wine;
No stint nor check as it filled the glass—
The heart that went out was mine.
The thing which flowed was the wine of life;
It flowed to the last degree.
The fires of a soul went out with it;
They say what is left is me.

'Tis true, it lives, it moves and it breathes;
But what is the part that is fled?
If this is life and I still live,
What is the thing which is dead?
The glass was drained e'en to the dregs;
The empty flask is mine.
It fills its place on the shelf the same;
The lips that have drained it were thine.



ON THE STRAND

By CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

FROM out the night slow breakers came and crashed
Upon the beach, ran high, sucked back and then
Curved, hissed and crashed upon the beach again.
A pallid, moonless night. In gray sky flashed
But dimly countless little stars. Abashed
By still and breathless void, the world of men
Had left the night to us; none knew it when
Our love stormed high while sullen surges clashed.

For this the surf beat slow and languidly;
For this the stars were dull and low the sky;
For this the dunes lay barren, comfortless.
Our hearts had sucked the passion from the sea;
Our souls, the vastness of the space on high;
Our love, the earth's spring thrill of fruitfulness.

KINSHIP

By VIRGINIA CHURCH

DIAN leaned forward and asked her question, more interested as to the revealing light it would throw on her companion than in the problem itself. "Do you really think, Mr. Wallace, that a woman who has committed so serious a fault should be received back in good standing, as though nothing had happened?"

Wallace looked at Mrs. Herford thoughtfully. "Is there no cleaning establishment," he asked, "recommended by your set, at which a lady who has drabbled her skirts may cleanse them sufficiently to sit once more among the elect?"

"Certainly not. Moral cleansing should be a matter of fire, not water." She was very earnest, very serious now.

"A fire lit by self-appointed judges, who wear their haloes at the proper angle and complacently watch their victims squirm," suggested Wallace.

Dian leaned back in her chair to give herself a moment to study over his cynical reply. She was of the exquisitely chiseled, finely bred type that bespeak generations of wealth and culture behind them. Her thirty years had given to her beauty a reposeful charm that made the glow of early youth seem awkward and crude in her presence. The two sat before an open fire, whose flames played softly on the hearth, their light accentuating the shadows on the man's strong face and brightening the spark that some thought had kindled in the woman's eyes.

"Do you think I've been too hard on this woman?" she asked finally.

"I think it usually takes a woman to be hard on another woman."

"She has sinned grossly, according to our standards," Dian persisted.

"Our standards!" Wallace smiled, an amused, tolerant smile. "I don't accept standards, dear lady. I set up my own totem poles. Let us see, though. The lady in question married a brute. Then she fell in love with Mark Eldridge, one of your set, and a member of your church, and went away with him. It's natural to suppose that Eldridge was a trifle to blame in the matter, but we'll pass that. The deserted husband made an unpleasant scandal, and was killed in an automobile accident shortly afterward. Eldridge immediately married the lady, and last month he died abroad. Now Mrs. Eldridge has returned home, and presumably penitent, wishes to become a member of the church to which her husband belonged. Am I correct?"

"You are. And Dr. Dornley wishes to receive her. He's a dear old man, but surely too lenient in this case. Don't you think so?"

"Some day I shall drop in and hear Dr. Dornley preach," Wallace remarked, with apparent irrelevance.

"You have an unpleasant habit of leaving my questions unanswered."

"I most humbly crave pardon. My admiration for your minister was the cause."

"Of course, *you* agree with him. Do you think a man is better qualified than a woman to understand this other type of our sex?"

"May I ask what you imply by the 'other type'?"

"Why, the class that gets itself mixed up in vulgar scandals, the class whose manners and morals are utterly foreign

to anything that should touch one's life, the type of woman with whom I have no kinship."

Wallace studied the beautiful, earnest face a moment in contemplative silence. "Do you really feel that you have no kinship with this woman?"

"Most assuredly. Can you imagine me going away with a man not my husband?"

"Easily."

"A quick flush stained Dian's cheeks and white throat. "I can only pardon you," she said slowly, "on the ground that, for all your experience of life and travel, you are unversed in the ways of woman. The mind of man seems to penetrate but haltingly into the unfamiliar maze of a woman's character. The feminine nature is too complex to be easily grasped."

Wallace smiled. "A woman likes to be thought complex. In reality, she is the simplest proposition in the world. Her instincts are elemental, her emotions primitive and her line of reasoning purely intuitive."

Now it was Dian who smiled tolerantly. "Do you assign us all to your primitive, elemental class, Mr. Philosopher?" she asked.

"Well, I have Kipling for an authority, if I should. You remember:

"When you to a man in the case,
They're alike as a row of pins,
For the Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins."

"I don't accept Mr. Kipling as an authority," Dian protested. "He also says that 'a woman's only a woman, but a good cigar is a smoke'."

"You don't like Kipling, because he fails to flatter you. He appeals to reason rather than emotion, and you women are all essentially emotional."

"I am not."

"You," Wallace said earnestly, "are the strongest argument I could use to prove my contention. You are a bundle of emotion, very properly veneered and restrained, but the emotion is there, dormant, powerful, crouched ready to spring the moment it is unleashed."

"You have known me—how long?" Dian arched her brows saucily.

"Two months by the calendar. But friendships are not reckoned by days or hours."

"True. But you have read my nature poorly. There is not a hint of emotion in my make-up."

"Rather, it has not been awakened."

"Do you know that I have been married seven years?"

"Yes, and you married a man you did not love."

Dian flushed at his frankness, though she had never publicly or privately made any pretense of love for Dick Herford. She liked him; they were good friends, and the arrangement suited them.

"There never lived a man who could inspire me with that feeling," she said slowly. "I'm no convent miss. I've lived and observed a good many years. Long ago I found I was an onlooker, not an actor in life's comedy—or is it a tragedy? Every play must have its audience, and I'm a confirmed first nighter."

"The curtain hasn't gone up on the right play," smiled Wallace. "Somewhere there is an actor who could draw you straight down from your curtained box onto the stage of life, laughing, weeping, sinning in the bright glare of the footlights, as other women have wept and laughed and sinned before you."

Gripped by a sort of fascination heretofore unknown by her, Dian watched his face as he talked. She could not analyze the feeling. She only knew that, more than any man she had ever met, Wallace absorbed her attention and made her think more deeply than was her wont.

"If there is such a man," she said thoughtfully, "I should like to meet him."

"Do you really mean that?" asked Wallace.

With an effort Dian forced a lighter mood. "Of course I do," she answered brightly. "It would be interesting, and would give me the chance to disprove your absurd ideas." As she spoke, she

realized that she had unwittingly thrown out her challenge, and her breath came faster.

"Then you shall." Wallace leaned forward, and held her eyes in an authoritative regard, so strong, so fierce, even, that the cave woman in her feared and shuddered, yet desired. And both knew the challenge had been accepted, and the game was on.

For a year Dian Herford was mentally sitting on the edge of her chair. She didn't know what this man of strong will and powerful personality might do. She half expected him to toss her onto a horse or ride away with her to some fortress'd castle, so suggestive to her of the knights of yore was the man's elemental strength and domination.

Yet neither by word nor act had Hamilton Wallace ever referred to the challenge he had accepted. He remained the same polished man that had interested her by his light quips and well turned sentences over the tea at their first meeting, but now Dian instinctively felt the cave man back of the polished surface, felt and feared him. The woman knew, moreover, that he had picked up the gauntlet she had cast down through no feeling of sentiment. To him she was only one of the many pretty, worth-while women who passed kaleidoscopically before him, and that she had made what appeal there was to his mentality, and not to any physical desire. He was a man who observed clearly, thought deeply and deduced keenly. Analysis of human character was his favorite pastime. Dian saw him now as an entomologist, with her soul squirming under his pin. At times she fiercely resented the dissection, and regretted that she had subjected herself to such an inquisition. She was quite certain that in the end he would fail. She could view his coming and going without the flutter of a pulse. Yet there was something, a vague, intangible feeling that her plans, her movements, her very thoughts were shadowed by a presence, immaterial, insidious, from whom she could never escape to find herself absolutely alone.

If Wallace felt any of the excitement of the chase or the eagerness of the psychologist, he failed to show it. He now came and went at the Herfords' with all the informality of an old time friend. Two evenings a week he managed to spend at their home, usually seated in his favorite great chair before the fireplace, a smoke wreathing cigarette in hand. Occasionally Dick Herford joined them, enjoying Wallace's talk, which often savored of the wild life in the tropics and forest, where much of his life had been spent. As a rule, however, Herford preferred his own cronies at his club, glad that his more mentally active wife had found someone sufficiently interesting to engage her.

At the end of the year, Dian sat back in her chair, her eternal vigilance relaxed. The fear that Wallace might attempt some familiarity, some caress, had proved so groundless, so unrealized, that she thought of it shamefacedly. He rarely touched her hand, either in coming or going, and his conversation, while intimate in the sense of comradeship, was impersonal and entirely free from any hint of sentiment. As Dian thought over the year, only one fact kept her from believing Wallace had relinquished or forgotten his purpose of conquest. There was an expression of authority that lurked back of the genial glance of the dark eyes, and a tone of proprietorship had crept into the rich voice. It was such a look as she imagined might be in the eyes of her velvet-footed shadow, such a tone as she might hear, should the silent one speak.

Then Wallace announced his purpose of going West on business for a few months, and told Dian where she should write to him.

"But I don't expect to write to you," Dian protested.

"Nonsense. You will write every day," he answered.

The timid little flame of independence that had tried to burn flickered out, but a woman's pride still fought with a woman's love of a master and kindled resentment in her breast. For three days after his departure she wandered

restlessly about the house with a vague sense of uneasiness which she steadfastly refused to analyze. Each morning there came a cheerful, impersonal letter, with no allusion to her own failure to write. On the fourth day she sat at her desk and wrote feverishly. It was only a short, formal note, but it broke through the barrier, and her letters followed daily. Only once after this did the spirit of rebellion spring up strong within her. Then she tossed aside her pen angrily, with a self-recorded vow to break away from the humiliation of such unnatural obedience. After a week of silence a telegram came, followed the next day by another. Eager to regain her own respect, she fought with all her strength against her ardent desire to write, and won.

With characteristic purposefulness, Wallace traveled back two thousand miles to see why his letters remained unanswered. He spent one evening in the city, spent it in the chair that had come to be called his. Throughout the evening Dian trembled in fear of his reproach, but her rebellion remained unmentioned. The following morning he was again on his way West, and Dian returned unquestioning to her desk.

Two months later Wallace returned home and resumed his evening calls. With his coming, a definite sense of uneasiness seized upon Dian. Though he drew his chair no nearer than had been his wont, she began to sense his presence in every fiber of her being. The sound of the electric bell, when it announced his arrival, clanged deafeningly in her ears. There were times when her voice forsook her, and she gave him a cold, slim hand, her eyes averted. A stealthy fear grew upon her, and more often laid choking fingers on her throat. Still, she refused to face the truth, to be alone with her thoughts. She declared she was not well, and announced her intention of going away for a rest. But she did not go. Instead, she plunged deeply into the social frivolities from which she had almost completely weaned herself, indulged in an excess of shopping, a round of teas and

balls. She saw less of Wallace, though neither remarked on the fact when they met. Suddenly she threw up all her engagements and came back to her fireside, tired, pale, now that the feverish flush of forced excitement had died from her cheek, and in her eyes a look of defeat. Wallace immediately resumed his visits.

An evening came, in midwinter, during which scarcely a word was spoken. The two sat deep in their chairs, the air tense with unuttered thoughts. At midnight Dian followed Wallace to the door and bade him good night calmly, though it sapped the final strength of her endurance. She leaned against the panels to steady her trembling body, through which the blood surged to the point of suffocation; then she dragged herself to her room. There in the dark she found a chair and sat with cold fingers clasped rigidly together, and deliberately, desperately threw open the door to that inner chamber of her being into which she had thrust all the torturing, mocking, leering things that for months had clamored for exit.

Out they rushed, impish, hateful, overwhelming. They danced and capered before her eyes in derision; they dragged her down, down into the darkest vales of humiliation it is permitted the human soul to reach. On they led her, until not a shred of convention or subtlety remained to conceal the bare truth, not a chip of the old veneer, so dear and familiar. Not a rag of her illusions was left. Every veil was rudely torn away by ruthless hands, until trembling, fearful, dismayed, she raised her frightened eyes to face this poor stripped self, mentally stark naked.

The pale dawn found her cramped and stiff from her long vigil, but she was stronger for having forced herself to face the crisis. With the first rays of the sun she rose, and crossing to her mirror, bravely sat before it, to look past the sweet oval of her face, through the clear gray of the startled eyes, beyond to that inner woman which only she and her God knew.

Bathed, dressed and sweet as the early morning itself, she sat awhile by

the open window, watching the sun-light in its unswerving progress across the grassy lawn. "I love him," she said steadily. "I love him better than all the world," and her mind having at last projected the thought into words, she felt better able to face the situation and chance curious eyes.

At the breakfast table, she watched her stolid, slow moving husband thoughtfully. She wondered how *he* would love, were he aroused. Would it be in the passionate, tumultuous fashion her own heart followed, or would love with Dick take the calm, phlegmatic course of his daily life?

She recalled a somewhat vague rumor circulated before their marriage, that he had loved a dancer, who died of consumption in his arms. Dian wondered if he ever thought of the girl now, if his empty arms ever longed for the feel of the living, breathing body. She looked into his eyes. They were dull, and she found her prying regard encountering a barrier through which she knew she would never be permitted to enter. Had he erected it to shut out interlopers from a region sacred to Her?

Her day was spent shut in her own room alone with her new self. She was trying to reconstruct her life, to fit together the broken bits that lay about her. Her mind was torn and bruised from its terrible journey down the old human paths. Yet she went on bravely, for some rebuilding was necessary, some basis from which to face old truths under new conditions. This much she knew, that she, Dian Herford, having lived all her life hedged about by conventions and glib platitudes, scorning her fellow humans, misunderstanding and underrating them, suddenly found her defenses down, and in the revealing glare of truth saw herself pitifully small and weak, less than the meanest of those she scorned. A married woman in love with another man—a man who, to make the humiliation more complete, had spoken no word of love to her, a man to whom she would give her life, her reputation, her honor, yet who had asked nothing! What was she to do? What was to be the future? In the

face of her self-confessed love for Wallace, she could not go on living with Dick, nor could she go away with Wallace, for—and here she drained the bitter cup to the dregs—he had not asked her to come to him. What *had* he done? Spoken no word of love, offered no slightest caress—only sat by her evening after evening drawing her heart out of her body, slowly, deliberately, mercilessly, until now what was there left?

By five o'clock she had reached a decision. She rose, wrapped herself in a warm cloak, called a taxicab and was driven to the home of Dr. Dornley.

"I came," she said abruptly, before there was time for the old clergyman to finish his cordial greeting, "to ask about that—about Mrs. Eldridge. I would like to withdraw my opposition—to make reparation—some way—if it isn't too late. I—I can't explain, Dr. Dornley. You wouldn't understand if I did, but I should be happier if I felt I had helped her in any way."

With gentle tact the clergyman forebore to question, merely telling her that Mrs. Eldridge had moved to another city. He had recently received a letter from her, telling him that she had found friends and spiritual comfort in her new home. He gave Dian the note to read. "Thank you. I am so glad," she said, handing back the letter. "And thank you for being so kind to me."

Dr. Dornley watched her thoughtfully as she crossed the park in front of the rectory. Accustomed to seeing the look in men's eyes that told of unspoken tragedy, he knew that Dian had journeyed into dark valleys.

In the park she rested a moment on one of the iron benches. For the first time Dian pitied herself. She suddenly felt very much alone in the great, busy world she was preparing to leave. Then, as the thought of those others who had gone out by their own hand came to her, she knew she was not alone, but one of that host she had so scorned. Tomorrow her life would be linked with those who had given up the fight and sought the solution of the great problem in their graves. The morning papers

would chronicle her name also in the column of deaths.

Dian stopped at three drug stores on her way home. With each purchase of the drug she intended to use, her purpose strengthened, until, at home, she went to her own room, where, alone and unafraid, she prepared for the end.

A novice in the use of chloroform, she took an overdose, and the timely discovery by her maid, combined with skillful work on the part of her physician, restored her to life.

Wallace came within the hour, summoned by a frightened servant who was unable to reach Mr. Herford. He was more tender than she had ever seen him,

and he asked her to go away with him.

"No, Hamilton," she said, smiling with something of her old time confidence. "That would undo all the good this experience has done me, and the cost has been too terrific not to reap the reward. I think Dick and I will go abroad until my health picks up. My nerves"—she held up a shapely white arm in verification—"are steady, you see. So it's good-bye, Hamilton. I have already acquired the moral strength that enables me to thank you for the lesson. You have taught me one of the big things of life, my kinship with all women, with humanity itself. The price was not too dear."



FATE AND THE JESTER

* By FREDERICK MOXON

LORD of What Is and Shall Be, ageless Fate,
Passionless, blind, nor knowing love nor hate,
Broods endlessly the Riddle, heaven deep,
Whose mystery inviolate He doth keep.

The All in One, the One in All, He links—
The lustful beast, the soul that, godlike, thinks;
The vestal's veil, the wanton's painted pride;
The praying saint, the scoffer at his side.

, Thrones heirless wait—a beggar's brat is born;
Night reels with fear—rose lovely smileth Morn;
Glad songs arise—while spectral mourners wail;
Flowers bloom for brides—and one turns lily pale!

Thy face, O Fate, is hidden in the dark;
Despair or fortitude our choice—but hark!
A Titan laugh shakes the resounding earth:
"Courage, faint heart! I am Life's jester, Mirth."

FRIVOLOUS

By NELLE RICHMOND EBERHART

"THIS is the very latest. Nothing sweller, nothing swaggerer ever happened. Will the Reverend John Straight untie his knotted brows and deign for one moment to observe his stylish wife-elect?"

The Reverend John Straight was observing her; nevertheless, he did not relax the stern brows which so contradicted his handsome, curved lips. The girl fairly exuded elegance from her finger tips. It was enfolding, permeating, down dropping. And Annabel Lynne was built for elegance, for beauty, for vain appurtenances. In appearance, all the attributes of tenth rate melodrama heroines were hers. No new words exist to depict what has been described a thousand times since blonde beauty was born in women. The vivid golden hair, the appealing deep blue eyes, the long lashes, the rose-tinted skin, the dimples, the slender grace, even the wealth and luxury, all met in Annabel.

She flirted airily up and down the long room, trailing straight, exquisite draperies with her. A momentary gleam lightened the glowering face of the young minister, but gloom again conquered.

"Annabel," he chided, less severely than the frown promised, "are you never serious?"

"Never!" she flashed. "So many other people are serious." She rolled her lovely eyes toward him and held out a long, thin coat. "You may now cover this splendor, John, for we must be going. You haven't said I look well." But the tone was mischievous, not wistful.

The arms which drew the coat over

the luminous gauze tightened about her shoulders fervently. "You look far too well for my peace of mind—that I know," he said against her glowing cheek.

But a little later, as they leaned back against the cushioned car in the late summer dusk, he looked at her with real trouble in his eyes. The trouble found words. "What am I ever to do with a butterfly like you?"

"Love me." She laughed the answer, yet her face sobered a little. John had begun lately rather to overthrum upon that string. Did he mean— She would not allow herself to finish the thought, whose very birth frightened the rose tints back to their source. For a moment even her lips were white. John did not notice; he had prepared a catechism for her, and the drive would be a short one.

"Annabel," he began abruptly, "did you go to see old Mrs. Dean this week?"

"Of course, John. I had promised you. Besides," with pretty eagerness, "I like Mrs. Dean. It is a pleasure to visit her."

John's infrequent smile illuminated his fine countenance. "I am so glad, sweetheart. Mrs. Dean has but little time on earth." Unconsciously his voice took on its ministerial tone. "I hope you were able to smooth her path."

"Oh, yes." Annabel was happy in John's rare approval. "She was so grateful, poor thing, and she said I cheered her so."

"Very good. I have at times found her a bit difficult, myself. May I ask what chapter you read to produce so desirable an effect?"

The girl hesitated, her eyes downcast,

her cheeks burning. Only a moment, then the mischievous imp which so tried John Straight's ecclesiastical temper twinkled in her blue orbs and frolicked in her dimples. "I read her four chapters of 'Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch,'" she confessed. Ignoring the consternation in his expression, she went on: "She said she knew all about Moses and the prophets, and even Job, who is the usual example for the afflicted. She was not in a mood for New Testament meditation and—"

"Annabel, that woman is dying!"

"She may as well go into Heaven laughing as crying."

They had reached the open country and Annabel looked away over the wooded hills with wet eyes. More and more often she and John came to a misunderstanding. She believed in individual needs and special cases; John worked by a system. She saw this and other causes of difference between them, not knowing how to put her vague insight into words; the man did not even see.

After a few moments of painful self-subduing, he began again wearily: "Dearest, those boys of yours seemed so interested on Sunday that I made an errand to pass your class. I heard—" There was no anger in his look now, but a white pain which sickened the girl as if she were watching a physical hurt. She was spurred to what she rarely offered—self-defense.

"John, dear, do you just always understand me? A little entertainment—can't you see that I am trying to win their hearts, John?"

John, from his man's knowledge, went over the collection of young rascals whose hearts Annabel desired to win. Unconsciously, without conceit, taking as his model of boyhood a younger Reverend John Straight, he devised their proper course of training and roused himself to argue:

"They should be summarily dealt with, Annabel. You do not understand those mission boys. Now, confess: Did you, under your system, detect any hopeful signs of penitence?"

Again the mischievous dimples danced.

"Joe Shaw said my hat was a peach, and that if I would promise to wear another just as swell next Sunday he would agree to come."

"Joe Shaw is sixteen years old. Does your vanity and frivolity stoop even to such as he?"

Annabel was ever weaponless against the stone wall of her lover's arguments. Her soft lips shut proudly. Not now could she tell him of the hours of preparation she had given the lesson that just one seed might be implanted in a neglected heart. She turned to him laughingly.

"I was trying to take the Kingdom of Heaven by strategy," she said, and for once John was too spent for words.

When, the spring before, the young minister asked his wealthiest parishioner for his daughter's hand, brusque Donald Lynne had replied:

"Frankly, I don't know, Mr. Straight. You're a good man and I don't ask for money, but I'm not so pleased as I might be. We've raised Annabel on love, and, if you'll excuse the remark, you look a bit stiff. Besides, I can't quite picture my girl a preacher's wife."

"I can't myself," the young rector owned. "I am afraid I am seeking to please myself rather than the Lord."

"Look here, John Straight," said Mr. Lynne bluntly yet without heat. "Annabel will please the Lord all right. Her mother's a saint, if her dad isn't, and the girl's been well brought up. It's your fool notions I'm afraid of. What she sees in you I can't make out."

"Neither can I," replied John with a warm humility which conquered the old man. "But through some strange circumstance we find ourselves very much in love."

The father reflected briefly before his decision. Then he answered: "Annabel is only twenty, and hasn't seen much of the world because, though she is so gay, she's been glad to make her mother and me forget some of our early troubles. Leave her a year, John, neither of you bound. Let her have her dancing, her beaus, her jollity. Then she can choose to please herself." He added

to himself: "And I hope it'll be someone else."

Perforce the lovers acquiesced, and so things continued. Nominally free, the young people considered themselves bound, and in happier moments planned a blissful future.

This night, as often, John was accompanying his betrothed to a summer dance, whither her parents had preceded them to give John this pleasure, for his conscience prohibited the dance and the theater. The man chafed at the arrangement, but, since the family had relinquished a Canadian outing to prevent a lovers' parting, he felt that life possessed compensations. Nevertheless, into Annabel's wistful reverie broke John's tenderest tones:

"We are almost in Maybank, dearie.
Are you so fond of dancing?"

"I am, Sir Knight of the Rueful Countenance. But"—the mischief faded from her glance—"I am much fonder of you, and I'd marry you tomorrow and let it all go."

As they reached a brilliantly lighted country residence John jumped out to lift her tenderly, all his carping lost in the lover.

"How light you are, darling! Are you quite well?"

"Quite, silly."

"Shall you dance often tonight?"

"Every time, with every handsome man in the house."

Disdaining his arm, she gave his fingers a little squeeze and ran lightly up the steps. A parallelogram of light swallowed her up and the dark door shut him out.

Going up to the dressing room, the girl's heart sang. John did love her, if sometimes he was cross. And how adorable he was when he loved! How intense were his dark eyes with either love or disapproval! How distinguished his black brows! Rehearsing the perfections of her lover, Annabel descended to the wide veranda with buoyant feet. Nothing tonight could express her feelings but rhythmic motion. Faithfully kept was her laughing vow to dance every time with every handsome man in the house.

But just as her girlish gaiety reached its gentle climax, radiant yet restrained, for Annabel never romped, she caught a critical whisper.

"That frivolous young thing to be our rector's wife? Absurd!"

The words struck her white and sick, much as John's criticisms did. The light steps faltered and the gay voice broke. Her frightened partner summoned her parents, who hurried her home, commanding confinement to a couch for a week. There she lay obediently, luxuriating under John's solicitude, which restored her failing vitality and set the roses to blooming upon her cheeks with startling brilliance.

But the next week the fluctuant rector resumed his caviling attitude. Some of the hens of his flock were bestirring themselves in his affairs. They waited upon him in a body, declaring that if he cared for the welfare of his church he must choose a more suitable wife.

"What did you tell them, dear?" Annabel asked in a strange, suffocated tone. Even in his perturbation the man noticed the detail of her delicate face, her lovely lines and tints. He ignored her question in a vague anxiety.

"I don't know why you flush and pale so easily, Annabel. You are quite white!" He pushed her gently back against the chair cushions and fanned her with concern.

For once Annabel spoke with vehemence. "It is because your love is my life, John. What threatens one threatens the other. What did you say to those women?"

"Can you ask?" he questioned with reproachful dignity. "Should I allow them for a moment to criticise you?" Annabel blushed beautifully under his fond regard, then shivered to perceive the trouble gathering in his eloquent eyes.

Suddenly controlling her nervous tremor, she sat upright. "John Straight, let us have this out now. Do you wish to break off our understanding?"

It was his turn to change color. "I do not." He was decisive enough, but his eyes avoided hers. He arose and paced the floor in agitation. "Annabel," he

broke out—it was evidently the releasing of a long gathering flood—"shall a man forsake his God for a woman?"

So that was his trouble. Annabel knew the intensity of his devotion, his flamelike aspiration. Her heart shook within her while she strove to gather her forces. He continued:

"Shall the desire of my lower nature deter me from the duties of my high calling?" He went over and knelt before her. "Darling," he whispered hoarsely, "each hair of your head is like a little tendril of fine gold binding me to you. The shaded blue pools of your eyes—I could drown myself in them. The voice of you—when you speak, God himself must be silent. It is not right; it is—abominable!" He tore himself from her tender clasp to resume his feverish pacing.

Annabel began very slowly in the suffocated voice which hurt one to hear: "Listen, dear. I do not speak easily, as you do. It is—difficult for me to speak of inner things. You talk of my hair, my eyes, my voice. They are so little. It is so true that I have a frivolous little body and frivolous ways. They have been sunshine to father and mother, who loved them because all the other children died. I didn't think till lately that I should wish to change." There was a long pause. Then she went on still more slowly and very low: "I see that I shall never change—that I cannot. I shall always be young and frivolous, even when my yellow hair and my blue eyes and my pretty tints have faded. But the heart of me, John, the—the—soul. Is there for you nothing back of the poor fading beauty? Doesn't my real self ever reach you, John?"

"What is the real you?" he questioned tonelessly. "I see in you only a beautiful woman with winning ways, sweet—far too sweet, but, if I must say it, shallow, inconsequent. I tell you, Annabel, you are to me but a snare of sin."

Annabel deigned to plead for her love. Trembling, unversed in all the ways of argument, by nature inarticulate, she yet strove against the inevitable.

"Why is the love for a good woman detestable? I think I read somewhere, dear, that a true devotee is a perfect lover on all planes. Isn't there some way—help me, John; you say things so well—isn't there some way a lower love may symbolize—may lead to a higher? I can love God through you; can't you—"

He stood over her fiercely. "No, I can't—with you. I could if a woman spoke to my soul. I tell you, your beauty is a madness to me."

"Then—" Emotion with Annabel had reached its climax and passed. With a wild, hysterical sob she gasped: "Then there is nothing for me to do but get smallpox. John—John—"

But John had gathered her to his heart with a vehemence which comforted her, though it left the question unsolved, and there followed a perfect hour wherein all but love was forgotten. But he, with his narrow intensity, reverted to it a little later.

"Oh, dear," the girl remonstrated impatiently, "why is your religion so queer? Now, my mother is very nearly perfect, and she belongs to the same church you do, yet her religion is very comfortable. But you want everyone to be alike. Can't you think that religion has a different language for each temperament? I am getting an understanding knowledge of yours. Won't you try to learn mine?"

He had had his moment of adoration. Now the saint in him again revolted. Again he questioned, measuring Annabel by a previously conceived standard. Had she an earnest soul? He remembered her kindness to all—but so many were merely kind; her settlement work, her charities—but they were a fad with many women; her intense affection for nature and the lower forms of life—but that might signify an artistic temperament. Where were the high soul communings which should exist between a devotee and his betrothed? Annabel shunned religious conversation; she avoided soul searching; she danced; she flirted; she frivoled. He raged inwardly, then made a swift resolve. This unworthy love

which distracted his attention from the higher life, this would he lay upon the altar. Very gently, in a mood of exaltation, he went over to Annabel.

"Dear, ever dear," he whispered tenderly, "good-bye."

She had no need to hear more. The white, pure, ardent maiden soul of her withdrew proudly. She was very cold in the intensity of her control.

"Good-bye."

"Do not grieve, dearest." For John's ecstasy was passing, and he felt very sore for her and for himself.

Out of the blackness of her pain she came for a moment to give the frivolous human answer, every dimple dancing: "Go in peace, John. The lovesick damsel shall not long lament."

Stunned, dazed, John Straight felt his way from her mocking presence. When she was sure he was gone, quite sure deep in the empty heart of her, she went up to her own room very slowly, fastening the door behind. Straight to the curtained alcove she went, into the little blue shrine, and knelt agonized before the Mater Dolorosa she had hung there to remind her that there was sorrow in the world although she was happy. And the Virgin of the Meadows, whose sorrow was not yet come, looked down from the other wall wonderingly.

In spite of all her pride, Annabel drooped. She had never been robust, and with her love life itself ebb'd. Remembering her father and mother, whose only joy she was, the girl fought valiantly a losing game. She told them lightly that she and John had decided they were unsuited, and her gaiety was undiminished. As they grew alarmed for her health she consented to have a gymnasium fitted up, which she facetiously called the "torture chamber." There, attended by her anxious and doting parents, she daily went through various exercises designed to remove all bodily ills. Yet she lost flesh steadily.

"Darling," wailed her mother after one of these performances, "you get worse every day. I shall have advice at once."

"Nonsense!" denied her daughter, clinging weakly to the couch where she

had dropped. "The spent gladiator but pauses a moment to repose. But if it will relieve your feelings I'll double my dose of olive oil."

"Do see Dr. Chatham."

"Next week," she temporized, feeling the futility of it all, yet desiring to give her mother that much respite.

When, a week later, Dr. Chatham was called, he gave her one look, then dismissed her fond attendants.

"Well," he asked huskily—he had known her from childhood—"what does this mean?"

She tried to force a jest, but the human desire to express her real trouble strangled the levity at her lips. She realized that she need not jest to her old friend; he did not depend on her for joy.

"Annabel, are you grieving for John Straight?"

"I am mourning the death of love," she admitted plaintively, even whimsically. Then her reserve melted, and she gave him the bare outline of the truth, without eloquence of speech but with pitiful sadness of heavy eyes and paling cheeks.

He examined her carefully, slowly.

"There is no reason why you should not get well, Annabel. You are only very weak."

"I know it and I am ashamed. Other women live without love."

"But Straight loves you, if ever I saw love. You can easily recall him."

She sighed wearily. "Yes, if I did but crook my finger so, and speak in a certain tone of voice, John would come to me across the world. But that I shall never do."

"But why?" he asked in perplexity.

"Haven't I explained to you? It is only my hair and my eyes and my tinted face that draw him. He would love them wildly one day a week and despise himself the other six. I may as well die now of desertion as later of that degradation."

Practical Dr. Chatham bristled with indignation. "But, my dear, who is sweeter, truer than you?"

Annabel gasped. "John does not see me with your eyes. And I do not talk soulfully nor piously."

"Soulfully the devil! I can tell him a few things."

She shook her head with a sure knowledge. "I know John. It may as well end now. He will love me better dead, anyhow. Then my frivolity will not hide my real self."

Dr. Chatham spoke with some heat. "So you think of dying to please John Straight?"

Annabel's gentle eyes blazed. "I am dying because I can't help it. Don't you think I realize the ignominy of dying because a man doesn't want me? But my pride and my will avail me nothing. You might examine the torture chamber." She laughed.

He opened the door indicated, glanced comprehendingly about and came gravely back. "You left little untried," he remarked.

He sat in angry, puzzled thought. He would prescribe, of course, but—Annabel was a wreck. Only the tonic of a glorious love would stimulate and permanently strengthen that faltering heart. He leaned toward her.

"Annabel, would you like to see that holy prig again?"

She turned toward him swiftly, her face all one lovely glow, her yearning eyes giving the answer her lips held back.

"Tomorrow," he promised, rising to take leave. "Meanwhile, cut out the torture chamber."

When John called next day, anxious and fearful, his first glance at the invalid afforded him immeasurable relief. Evidently, he decided, Dr. Chatham had exaggerated. Annabel was thin, ethereal even, but she was up, exquisitely dressed, bright in manner. He had never seen her color more vivid nor her sweet eyes more warm with love. Without kissing her, he assured her tenderly how grieved he was that she had been ill, how happy he was that she looked so well as she did.

Annabel's animation cooled pathetically. Her breath began to come short, yet she held her voice steady. "We are going abroad, John, for a long time. I thought you would care to say goodbye."

Again the young clergyman felt the glamour of her as strong as ever. Not so could mere beauty bind, if he had not been too stubbornly blind to see. Momentarily he yielded to the spell, his hungry eyes feasting upon the soft masses of her yellow hair, the pulsing whiteness of her bare throat, the slim grace of her half-reclining figure. His stern eyes softened; his curved lips parted in the rare smile she longed for; his hand sought and clasped hers. She half rose to meet his embrace, but caught a poignant expression of remembrance, of withdrawal, as human love made way for the sacrificial rapture of the devotee. As he dropped her hand, John saw Annabel whiten horribly and her head fall back. At his cry the others hastened up, and she was soon revived to find John kneeling at her feet.

"Leave us just a moment," she begged the doctor and her mother.

"Two minutes, exactly," Dr. Chatham granted.

Feebly she looked at John. Something remote there was about him, something priestly, fanatical.

"Annabel, dearest, do you ever pray?"

She viewed him compassionately. "Is that all you wish to ask? Everyone prays, John." Her eyes left his to wander toward the curtains of the little blue shrine. She shook to think what prayers, what agonized petitions she had prayed there—for him.

"I am afraid you are very ill. Shall we pray together?"

"No!" The tone was half savage. "You think I am dying? Well, I hate deathbed scenes. I sha'n't have one."

His teeth shook together with his fear, his love, his repulsion. He saw that the new nurse was going to interrupt. "Good-bye," he said awkwardly, deserted of his fluent tongue. Then he bent over her with wild despairing tenderness. "Sweetheart, is there anything, anything you would like?"

A powerful effort of will drew her faculties together. Longing to throw herself at his feet, yearning to feel his arms about her in her strange utter weakness, she flashed her eyes at him

and forced the old mischievous dimples, deceiving the watchers across the room. Gaily she flung out:

"I want Damrosch to play the 'Blue Danube' for me to waltz to!"

It was the last upspurting flame. Before the, to him, terrible words, before the terrible growing stillness of her face, he stepped backward as the passionate lament of her mother filled the room. Dazed, he put out his hand and found himself in a curtained alcove alone, where tokens and symbols of both strange and familiar faiths commanded reverence. The priest in him responded instantly to the atmosphere, to the dimly sensed pure blue, ivory and gold, to the open Bible, the crucifix, the stained window, the vase of waxen, perfumed blossoms. Even the two Mardonas he discerned through a tender,

quiet haze. Last of all shone out to him a golden motto, small, quaintly lettered, inconspicuous, yet mystically dominating the whole place. "Before the eyes can see, they must be incapable of tears."

That, then, was the lesson she had set herself to learn in those last terrible weeks. Vaguely John began to grope toward an understanding of her, an understanding which momentarily, under the spell of this sacred intimacy, grew more luminous. Annabel had said that John would love her better dead. As he sank to his knees the despair in his heart was also relief. There had been something fine which his inner self had recognized. Her soul had not matched the lovely, perished, frivolous body. For the first time he knew his love soul to soul, no blinding veil between.



WHAT THE POET BROUGHT

By JAMES WILLIAM CALLAHAN

HE came and went that day so quietly
I scarce knew he had come ere he was gone,
But, turning, saw that he had left upon
My hearth a casket with a golden key;
And in the box that he had brought to me
I found a crimson sunset and a dawn,
A cloud, a rainbow and a grassy lawn,
A cloth of moonbeams and a honey bee,
A rose, a ribbon and a lock of hair,
A woman's picture and a signet ring,
A silver stream within a woodland wild,
A dewdrop on a lily frail and fair,
The music of a bluebird in the spring—
And best of all, the laughter of a child.



THE pessimist would be an optimist, only for his habit of waiting for sober second thought.

AS THE OLD YEAR DIES

By WILLIS LEONARD CLANAHAN

RIP VAN WINKLE lived on a bluff for twenty years, but that is not the record.

If people would only pay as they go, so many would not have to go.

Most novelists care not who may point the moral, as long as their names adorn the tale.

SOME men are averse to vice, and some are *vice versa*.

Not all gall is divided into three parts. Many men manage to preserve theirs intact.

It never tickles a candidate to be scratched by a voter.

We may win all the other points in the game of life, but the undertaker holds the cards and the gravedigger the spades.



DESIRE

By EDGAR S. NYE

SILENCE and separation and the ache—
Restless and dumb—of the desire to see
One face alone of all humanity!
Oh, Absence, how we suffer for your sake!
How heedlessly! Had we the strength to take
Our lives between our hands, and shake them free
From all the dull world's stupid tyranny,
What masterworks of living we might make!

THE THEORY

By ATKINSON KIMBALL

"WELL, the places you take one!" exclaimed Arthur Athington. Florence Acton turned to him from the dark, dusty corner where on previous visits to the little shop she had found what she conceived to be treasures in beaten brass and ancient copper. Her coil of hair under her hat had itself the gleam of some glowing, polished treasure.

"I told you that you wouldn't like it," she said in the crisp tone which made her voice seem at times rather sharp; "but I didn't exactly take you by the hand and lead you here."

Her companion, who upon entering the shop had taken up his place just within the door, with the effect of keeping his tall, handsome presence clear of the huddled masses of metal, now came forward. There was on his lips the kind of speech which came there so easily in his intercourse with women, but which he had found Florence didn't like. He had been on the point of saying: "Oh, if *you* take me by the hand you can lead me anywhere." He crushed down the impulse, however.

"But I *do* like it," he protested. "I think it's very interesting. I think that *all* the places you have introduced me to are interesting. I didn't realize until I met you that there were so many queer places in New York. It's really been an education for me. You have given me private lessons out of school hours—just as if you didn't have trouble enough *in* school hours with all your little foreign heathen."

Some of Florence's little foreign heathen at that moment had their noses flattened against the grimy glass of the door in an effort to see what their

teacher was doing in the shop. She motioned to them to run away, and the owner of the brazen treasures, a Russian Jew, who was also owner of two or three of the little heathen, ran toward the door gesticulating wildly. The children scattered into the crowded East Side street, and the man, with a re-assumption of his passivity, returned to his former position. He made no attempt to display his wares, and Athington took it upon himself to discover choice pieces.

"Now, for instance, take this thing," he said, reaching up above his head, where on a shelf more or less dusted a number of articles, more or less polished but neither beaten nor ancient, had been placed to catch the popular eye. "You couldn't find a thing like this the whole length and breadth of Fifth Avenue. It's unique. It's an education in itself."

He held out for her inspection a slim gourdlike copper receptacle with a long curved spout and a high curved handle.

"Well," replied Florence, "I can't answer for Fifth Avenue, but I can for Sixth Avenue and Twenty-third Street. They have them in the department stores. There's even one in your house. I think it's in your own particular den."

He put the thing back on the shelf; then he turned and looked at her. They smiled at each other in silence for a moment while he dusted the tips of his gloved fingers together. Florence Acton's smile was charming. It softened the expression of her brown eyes, whose gaze was ordinarily too clear, too direct.

"It's no use," he said. "You always find me out; you always take me up. But how are you so sure that there is

one of those outlandish teapots—if they *are* teapots—in my house? You can't, at any rate, have seen it in my study; you've never been in it."

"No, I've never been further than the drawing-room, and the only time I was there your wife didn't pour my tea out of that sort of thing. It isn't," she interpolated, "*for* tea; it's for wine, I believe. However," she continued, "I happen to know that you have one, for I was in this very shop when Mrs. Athington bought it. She said it was to be a birthday gift for you. She thought it was so decorative."

His smile became fixed. "My wife comes here—to this shop?"

"To this shop and the others near here. You don't seem to realize that you are almost alone in your deplorable ignorance of New York. This spot is the Mecca for hunters of the antique. Mrs. Athington told me that she comes here five or six times a year to lay in a stock of antiques. They make such up-to-date presents. It was the day she bought that"—the girl tilted her head slightly toward the shelf above—"that we renewed our former acquaintance and she carried me off in her carriage to drink tea with her."

"And it was then we met," Athington said with an organlike tone in his voice. This tone made his most trivial remarks seem full of a deep and hidden meaning.

"Yes, it was then we met," Florence repeated lightly. On her lips it became a mere statement of fact. She apparently was never conscious of any meaning but the obvious one, and it was this air of taking things at their face value, without at all taking them as a fool, which charmed Arthur Athington. It charmed him because it piqued him. He couldn't believe that she was as straightforward as she appeared.

He had called it a happy accident when a few days after his wife had presented him to her he had met her on Hester Street as she was strolling home from school, and had turned and walked with her to her car. This happy accident, due, as he explained, to some business he had in the neighborhood, had repeated itself many times since

then; but Florence Acton had never by the slightest sign shown herself skeptical of a business which took a corporation lawyer to Hester Street.

Their intercourse would have seemed to a third person one of those mild flirtations which Arthur Athington, as a handsome man more or less beset by an adoring sex, sometimes permitted himself; but if it was a flirtation it was of a kind totally new to Athington. It was a new thing to find that he had to use his brain in conversation with a woman in the same way that he did with men. There had been plenty of women who had forced him to keep his wit burnished and had then outshone him; but Florence Acton had made him call upon his storehouse of sober facts on every subject, it seemed to him, under the sun. He had begun their acquaintance by expressing a strong interest in her school work; and he had gone on expressing interest in everything in which she was interested. Her interests were manifold and had served as a reason for many little excursions to various and, to him, out-of-the-way places. He had, for instance, gone with her to the dim and dusty galleries of the Historical Society, to the Lenox Library, to a college settlement, even to the Metropolitan Museum. His friendship had been, as he said, an education for him: he had learned many things; but it was an education which he would not consider finished until he had learned more about his teacher.

He knew that she had come from the same town in which his wife had lived before her marriage; that she was a graduate of Vassar; that her father had lost his health and eventually his life with the loss of his money; and that she had come to New York alone to earn her living as a teacher in the public schools—she had had a chance to become a teacher in a wealthy private school, but the public schools were one of the things in which she was interested.

These facts, however, were not the ones which Athington wanted to learn. What he wanted to know was why a girl of Florence Acton's breeding should be so regardless of conventions as to go

about as she did with a married man. If it had been one of his mild flirtations he could have understood, for it was one of the conventions of a mild flirtation to go discreetly about with a married man, which somehow made the proceeding regular. If she had been of an ignorance which could be called innocence, that would have explained it; but if she had been innocent she would have been romantic, and romantic was the last term one could apply to her. Athington finally decided that among her other theories she had a theory of the relation of the sexes, a theory which, as embodied in her virginal aloofness of spirit, seemed to solve that perplexing problem by the simple expedient of eliminating sex.

Florence had brought Athington to the shop to show him what really "good" things one could pick up if only one *knew* "good" things, and she had been poking about in the dark, dusty corner for some minutes before she turned toward him triumphantly with something in her hand.

"There!" she cried. "That's the real thing. Buy it. Take it home to Mrs. Athington as a proof of what your ex officio education is doing for you."

Athington gave the girl a more searching gaze than he bestowed on the small, carved, bronze bell she placed in his hands. She always spoke as though his wife were cognizant of all their little excursions, and he had not been able to decide whether or not she really believed that he told Julia everything.

"Ah!" he ventured in this instance. "If I give her this, she'll know I never could have found it myself."

"Tell her, then, that you recognized its beauty after I pointed it out to you. The recognition of beauty is not a common gift."

With another woman he would have taken this as a signal for one of his graceful little speeches. He pressed the bell back into her hands. It gave forth a rich, sonorous note.

"You take it," he said. "Please let me give it to you. Keep it on your desk to summon your little heathen. I have never given you a thing, not even a flower."

Florence hesitated for an instant; then, as if upon a sudden decision, she took the bell from him. "Thank you," she said. "I should like it. It is exquisite."

"Thank you," Athington returned. "Here," he cried, turning to the shopkeeper; "I'll take this."

He took the bell from Florence and handed it to the man. The little shop was full of the deep resonance of Athington's gift as the door opened and a woman rustled in, preceded by a delicate wafture of violets and followed by a young man.

The Hebrew hurried forward. It had apparently struck him that the shop, though light enough for an old customer like Miss Acton, was dim for any customer less old. The ragged flare of two gas jets, one at either side of the window, furthered this distinction; the forepart of the shop became brighter than the early winter twilight without; the dusky corners in the rear grew dusker. This illumination was sufficient, however, to show that the new customer of the softer sex was tall and graceful, with an air of quiet elegance.

She looked at the shopkeeper as he faced about from the window; then she turned to her companion, a young man of about twenty-five, with a pleasant, plain face and a rather thick set figure. "This is the shop I have been looking for," she said. "This is where I got those lovely brass things in the fall. The shops all look alike on the outside, but I remember this gentleman's face," she went on, giving the enraptured Hebrew a little smiling nod. "I am sure that I shall find what I want here."

Arthur Athington at the sound of her voice had involuntarily turned his back and then had quickly wheeled round and gone toward the newcomers.

"My dear Julia!" he cried with a great deal of animation. He made the lady an exaggerated bow; he shook the young man's hand in cordial greeting; he was flushed, smiling, excited, uneasy. "You find *me* here. Now, don't say that isn't what you want. If you want lovely brass, you surely want me. There,

Wilbur," he laughed, "I got ahead of you."

The young man laughed in return, and said that though Athington was certainly lovely and possibly brassy, he wasn't antique, and Mrs. Athington was looking for antiques.

The lady during this colloquy had not taken her eyes from her husband's face. Her small, charming head was slightly lowered. She looked at him with a level gaze that was neither smiling nor severe. She had the effect of waiting, the observant, expectant air of an onlooker at a play.

"Let me serve as the antique. I feel antique at the end of a school day," broke in a crisp, feminine voice, and Florence Acton moved forward from the shadowy back of the shop into the light from the two gas jets. This sudden appearance was rather apparitional; each of the three persons whom she approached started, but the sharpest start was Athington's.

"How do you do, Mrs. Athington?" she went on, holding out her hand. "Isn't it a coincidence that we should meet here again?"

Mrs. Athington stared at her for an appreciable instant without speaking. Her start of surprise had left her figure erect and somewhat tense.

"Ah, Miss Acton," she said after a moment, taking her hand, "don't call yourself antique. If *you* are antique, what am *I*?"

"You didn't protest, Julia," her husband exclaimed with another laugh, "when I called myself brassy. I feel hurt."

"Well, she didn't protest when you called yourself lovely, either," interpolated the young man.

The lady in question took no part in this persiflage. She continued to look at the girl whose hand she had retained. "You must show me all the wonderful things that are tucked away here. You helped me so much the last time I came."

The two women moved away. The little Hebrew picked up a huge candlestick holding a morsel of candle which he lighted as he hurried after them.

Athington turned to his remaining companion. "It's evident, Wilbur, that you and I aren't considered judges of wonderful things."

"I think that *you* are," responded the young man, looking at Florence, who had taken the candlestick from the shopkeeper in order the better to search out treasures, with the result that her own youthful bloom was revealed in the warm, wavering nimbus of the flame.

Athington chose to ignore the intention of this speech, if it had intention. "Oh, Julia!" he called. "Wilbur thinks that *I* am a judge of wonderful things, too. You must let me help."

Mrs. Athington raised her eyes from an inspection of a copper bowl which Florence had placed in her hands, and smiled at the girl.

"Do you want Mr. Athington's help?" she asked. "I don't believe he knows anything, not even brass from copper, but he can do the rummaging about in the dust for you." Her husband was already at her side, but he evinced no disposition to rummage. "Come here, Wilbur," he cried; "come here and see how much I know."

When the young man came up, however, he presented him to Florence Acton as Wilbur Hammond, a ninety-seventh cousin of his, who was densely ignorant of lovely old brasses, and he besought her to give him a few simple pointers. Mr. Hammond showed a mind eager for knowledge as he moved beside the girl and took the candle from her. He flashed the light upon objects he admired, and this admiration presently led him and Florence away from the Athingtons.

Athington turned to his wife with a sigh of relief that was almost audible. "Now," he said, "I can explain how I came to be here with Miss Acton. I couldn't explain before her and Wilbur; it would have looked as though I attached importance to a casual meeting."

His wife gave him her expectant, level gaze, but said nothing.

"I wanted to get you some old copper or brass thing for a Christmas present," he continued with his candid air. "I admired so much that copper teapot

affair you gave me that I wanted to get you something as unique. So here I was, wandering helplessly about this ghetto, when I was lucky enough to run across Miss Acton. I recognized her, and she, thank heaven, recognized me. I asked her aid, and she brought me here. She knows this section like a book. She tells me that her school is near here."

"Yes, you were very lucky," Mrs. Athington agreed gravely.

"I was lucky to remember her face. It was back in the fall that I met her, you know."

"Miss Acton has a face one would remember." She dropped her eyes on the copper bowl which she still held, and then said: "I am glad that you admired that copper teapot affair. I never heard you express your admiration for it before."

"I was just expressing it to Miss Acton before you came in. She said she was with you when you got it for me."

Mrs. Athington made no answer to this. She bent her head over the bowl as if to catch its pink gleams in the dim light.

"I think I'll take this," she said in a moment. "It will do very well. I am too tired to look further."

"Ah, my dear," her husband exclaimed, taking the bowl from her, "you have been shopping too much. We'll go straight home."

He advanced toward Hammond and Miss Acton, holding up the bowl. "We have beaten you," he laughed. "See what a wonder we have found."

"And see what a wonder Miss Acton and I have found," retorted the young man, turning round. He offered for inspection the long, slim copper receptacle which Athington had called a teapot.

"I wanted one of these things to give my sister. You know, Julia, how much I liked the one you gave me," he went on to Mrs. Athington. "I told Miss Acton that I was looking for a duplicate of a lovely thing you had given me last fall. I described it, and she knew at once what I meant. She was here, it seems, when you got it."

Athington flushed; he opened his lips

as if to speak, then shut them and looked at his wife. She returned his look, and he read in it confirmation of his error. His explanation had been, as had happened once or twice before, too complete, too circumstantial; but if there was a pardonable triumph in Julia's smile, it was not a happy triumph. He was glad of the diversion which the shopkeeper made by coming forward but this relief became a heightened embarrassment when he perceived that the man was offering him his former purchase, the bronze bell, now neatly wrapped up.

"Is that another wonder?" Hammond asked, glancing at the package in Athington's hands.

"It's a wonder of wonders; it's magnificent," Athington said with his uneasy laugh. "Miss Acton discovered it before you came."

"More of a wonder than this?" queried the young man, shaking his copper purchase at Athington before handing it to the waiting Hebrew; but Athington, murmuring something about seeing whether the carriage was just outside, went to the window and peered into the street.

"Is it more of a wonder?" Hammond persisted, turning to Florence.

"It's very lovely," the girl said.

"I say, Athington, let's see the thing. I'll wrap it up for you again. I have the antique fever. Do gratify me." He went toward the window.

The older man faced him with a smile as uneasy as his laugh. "You mustn't ask to have your curiosity gratified when Christmas is so near," he said.

"Oh!" laughed the young man. "If I'm to find it in my stocking—"

Florence Acton returned the appeal in Athington's eyes with a gaze that was more direct than usual. The tone in which she refused Mrs. Athington's offer of a seat in her brougham was very crisp. She was going back to her school, she said; she had left some papers there; the school was quite near. If she drove up in a carriage the whole neighborhood would troop out to see what was the matter.

"At least," urged Mrs. Athington, "you must allow either Mr. Athington or Mr. Hammond to take you to the school."

"Oh, do allow me, Miss Acton," cried Wilbur Hammond. "I want to see the whole neighborhood troop out. If they troop out for a carriage, they will surely troop out for me."

As Mrs. Athington took the girl's hand in parting she said earnestly: "Will you come to see me? We ought to know each other better."

"That's what I wanted you to know; it's why I asked you to meet me here. I wanted you to know that I hadn't been flirting with you—that our companionship had been for me the realization of an ideal, an ideal that I have held ever since I was in college."

Florence Acton spoke in a tone that put her college days in the remote past, but looked, in the girlish intensity with which she gazed at Arthur Athington, as if those days must still be in the future.

It was the day after the *contretemps* in the brass shop; and Athington, in compliance with a note he had received, had met her in that narrow balcony of the Metropolitan Museum where Rembrandt sketches are on view in little glass-covered screens. Athington and Florence had the balcony to themselves. Only the art students came to look at the drawings, and they didn't come on Saturdays.

"As I understand it," said Athington, "our companionship has been your ideal because it has been exactly like the companionship between two men or two women."

"Yes. I have enjoyed our walks and talks just as I should have enjoyed walks and talks with a woman with whom I had as many mutual interests as I had with you; but," she added, "I have never known a woman with whom I had so many interests in common."

Athington had at last found out what he wanted to know. He had learned in what light Florence Acton regarded their companionship; although he was touched and a bit ashamed that she

should have considered him worthy of standing in a beam so blindingly white, the revelation was not without its element of chagrin for a man.

"What have I done to shatter your ideal?" he asked, and he couldn't refrain from adding: "Haven't I acted like a perfect lady?"

"It isn't what you've done," Florence said, too much in earnest to pay any attention to his mild joke—"it's what you have *not* done. You didn't tell Mrs. Athington that you were meeting me. I saw yesterday that you hadn't told her, and that you were fearful that I might let the fact slip out. You were afraid to give me the bell before her."

They were standing in one of the compartments made by the glass screens, Athington with his back to the railing, Florence facing him. He looked at her with the defiance men are apt to feel in acknowledging a fault.

"No, I didn't tell her. Why should you care whether I did or didn't?"

"I care because your silence is an index of the way you regarded our companionship. If you had felt about it as I felt and as I believed you felt too, you would have told her; but if you thought it was a sort of flirtation, you wouldn't have told her; you would have hated to have her find it out."

Athington was silent for an appreciable instant, and when he spoke it was with hesitation.

"I shouldn't say what I am going to say if I didn't feel that I owe you the truth. Yesterday through me you were placed in a very unpleasant position; and in the light of what happened yesterday, I have hurt your feelings by appearing to flout your sincerity with my insincerity. I can make reparation only by telling you something that I have never spoken of to any other person. My wife, my dear Miss Acton, is insanely jealous. The first year we were married she threatened to kill herself because of her jealousy."

A wave of color swept over Florence's face; she gazed at Athington with horror-stricken eyes.

"You hadn't thought of that possibility, had you?" Athington said in a

gently explanatory tone. The girl mutely shook her head. "You see," he went on, "you are an idealist, and idealists make the mistake of thinking everyone is like them. You couldn't imagine being jealous yourself."

"Why did you continue our acquaintance when you knew how your wife felt?" Florence demanded. "Why did you let me think she knew?"

"Because if I hadn't let you think that, you would have broken off our friendship, and I cared too much for your friendship to risk losing it."

"Yes, of course we mustn't see each other any more," Florence said slowly. "But are you sure that she could be jealous of *our* friendship?"

"She wouldn't understand." Athington shook his head sadly; when he looked sad his blue eyes became a very dark blue. "Besides, she's jealous of you already."

"Then you *have* told her of our meetings?"

"No, I haven't told her, but she has guessed."

"But she was so kind to me yesterday. She asked me so cordially to come and see her," Florence protested.

"She always asks the women she thinks I admire to come to see her. It gives her a chance to see us together."

"Oh!" said the girl in the flat tone which is sometimes more expressive than a more emphatic one. And then she added: "It is getting late; I must go."

The high, cold light of the museum had indeed begun to fade.

"May I walk across the Park with you?" Athington asked.

"No; I'm going to take the stage. And there are not to be any more walks and talks," Florence said decisively.

The light was still strong enough to show the clear brown of her eyes, the smooth, soft texture of her skin. It suddenly seemed to Athington that his companionship with this girl had meant a great deal to him, something too rare to lose without a struggle.

"But I can't consent to give you up," he protested. "I can't tell you how much our friendship has been to me. I

can't tell you how I have looked forward to our little walks and talks. You typify youth and all the beauty of it. I can't give you up."

There was the organlike tone in his voice, but there was also the ring of real emotion.

"Well, then, *I must give you up,*" Florence said, smiling rather tremulously; "and I haven't as many friends in New York *to give up as you have.*"

"Oh, I haven't anyone like *you!* I have never known anyone like you!" Athington answered. "Now that we understand each other so perfectly, I *can't give you up.*"

He looked at her appealingly, but she returned his gaze with soft, unwavering eyes.

"And I mayn't even write?" he asked. "Not even an occasional letter?"

"Not even an occasional letter." She held out her hand in farewell. Athington took her hand in his. "At least, I shall always have the memory of our friendship," he said. Even through her glove, Florence felt the warm pressure of his renunciation.

Athington not only took Miss Acton at her word, but what was more unusual, he apparently took himself at his word. The purlieus of Florence's school during the days immediately succeeding the interview in the museum were no longer brightened by his handsome, well groomed person. In spite of his absence, however, Florence was not without material for the application of her ideal. Wilbur Hammond began to haunt the ghetto in much the same manner that Arthur Athington had. The coming holidays, with their attendant giving of gifts, caused him to journey to the little brass shop almost every day. The East Side streets became more crowded than ever as Christmas drew near; pushcarts piled with cheap imitations of everything for sale in the shops uptown lined the curb; the approaching Christian festival was excellent for business even in a Jewish community, and Hammond was witness of many a dramatic bit of Yiddish bargaining. On these occasions he was

always meeting Miss Acton by the luckiest chance, as he said, but his luck took very few chances; patience and perseverance made it a certainty.

It would have occurred to a third person that here was excellent material to Florence's hand: a young man plainly eager for the walks and talks she had renounced with Athington, a young man who, it was evident, was much in need of being treated as though he were a woman because he seemed powerless to treat Florence as though she were a man. It is only a fanatic, however, who applies his or her particular theory in and out of season; and perhaps Florence Acton felt that she was applying her theory negatively, at least, when she persistently evaded Hammond's efforts to further their acquaintance.

Once when she was with Hammond she caught sight of Athington on the other side of the street; but she could not tell whether he saw her. It was not long after this that Hammond, by one of his lucky chances, found himself in front of Florence's school just as she came out. She was the center of a jostling group of her little East Side pupils, who crowded about her as she stood on the step, stretching up their hands toward a box of flowers which, while she laughingly commanded them to be quiet and wait their turns, she held above their reach. Their mournful Semitic eyes glowed with pathetic acquisitiveness as they waited to receive the flowers which Florence drew one by one from the long pasteboard box.

"There! That's all," she said as she thrust the last flower into a grimy paw; then noticing the tragic face of a small girl who had failed to get any of the spoils, she handed her the box instead. An embryo merchant, the possessor of a pink rose, at once opened trading negotiations.

The group dispersed and Florence descended the steps. She started and blushed when she saw Hammond, and gave him a silent nod in greeting. As he turned to walk beside her, she said: "That's what I've done with every single one of them. I've given them all away like that." She looked at her

companion defiantly, her rounded chin held high above the fur collar of her coat.

"I saw that you did," Hammond answered. "I was guilty of watching you from the time you came out of the school until even the box had been given away."

"I was embarrassed for an instant that you should have seen me giving them away," she went on, "but now I'm glad that you did. It's more eloquent than any words of mine could be; and I had made up my mind that I would have to speak to you about it. I can't take boxes of beautiful flowers back to the boarding house; I can't continue to give them away here. I'm sorry if I seem ungrateful, but," she concluded, again striking the defiant note with which she had begun, "you had no right to do it. An anonymous gift is almost as bad as an anonymous letter."

Hammond flushed in his turn. "I shouldn't call a gift anonymous if I were as sure of the giver as you are," he said.

Something in the tone of his voice caused Florence to stop in the crowded street and stare at him. "Do you mean you *didn't* send them?" she asked.

"I didn't send them," he answered.

"Then, who did?" she demanded as if he must still be somehow to blame; but the next instant, as if she realized her rude injustice, she added, walking quickly on again: "You see, I have talked with scarcely any other man in New York but you and Mr. Athington, and of course Mr. Athington didn't send them."

"Why, 'of course'?" Hammond asked, shaken out of his customary equable temper by a rising jealousy of the unknown giver. "Is Athington more fair and open than other men?"

"Mr. Athington may not be different from other men; but our friendship was different from other friendships between a man and a woman," Florence said proudly. "A man doesn't send flowers to another man, and that is the way Mr. Athington felt toward me."

Her clear, brown eyes met Hammond's. He saw that she believed

what she said, and he gave an abrupt laugh. "Did Athington tell you that was the way he felt?"

"I told him that was the way *I* felt, and he said it was the way he felt too," she explained patiently. Perhaps she considered that she owed him explanations and patience for the way she had treated him.

"You told him that you felt as though he were another man?" Hammond gave another laugh.

"I knew you wouldn't understand," Florence said with a sort of resigned contempt.

"Oh, platonic friendships are several centuries old. I understand them, but I don't believe in them."

"And I don't believe in *them*, either," the girl said. "But I do believe that a man and a woman can have common interests which make them like to see and talk with each other quite apart from the fact that they *are* a man and a woman."

"Still, the fact remains that they are a man and a woman and not two men or two women," Hammond said. "And it's a very potent fact—I don't say that it's potent with a woman, but I know that it's potent with a man."

"Of course I saw in the brass shop that you thought Mr. Athington was flirting with me," Florence said, making a personal application of Hammond's generalization, "so I wasn't surprised when *you* tried to flirt with me." Her contempt had lost its quality of resignation.

"*II*. Flirt with *you*!"

The young man was brought to a standstill by his horror and amazement. He automatically got in motion again, impelled forward by a Syrian who was walking immediately behind him and whose momentum carried him and his roll of rugs smartly against Hammond's back. When a crowd is large enough, its units seem to lose their individuality except for themselves, and a man experiences a sort of insulated solitude; Hammond, surrounded by a hurrying, self-absorbed mass of his fellow creatures, was conscious only of the girl at his side.

"Flirt with you!" he repeated. "Haven't you seen that I love you? I think I began to love you the first moment I saw you in the brass shop. I know I have no right to say this to you, and I didn't intend to; at least, I didn't intend to unless you seemed to like me a little more, or, rather, dislike me a little less; but your misapprehension of my feeling for you forced the truth from me. Of course, I know that you don't care for me now, and I am not going to ask you whether you think you might ever learn to."

He paused and looked at Florence. He had stared straight ahead of him while he made his declaration; and the fixed profile which she presented to his scrutiny showed him that she, for her part, had listened without looking at him.

"You don't care for me, do you?" he pleaded with a sort of despairing hope. "You couldn't ever learn to care for me, could you?"

The girl made a vague, protesting gesture and turned her face toward him. Her eyes were full of tears.

"Of course, I knew you couldn't," he repeated dully.

A few days later Florence left the city to spend her Christmas vacation at home with her mother. Her floral persecution, however, did not cease with her departure from New York. It followed her to Olean, where on Christmas morning the expressman delivered at her home a box longer and broader than any she had yet received, with the well known green and white label of the florist pasted on its cover.

"Who do you suppose is sending you flowers from New York?" Mrs. Acton demanded as she caught sight of the label.

Her daughter was her idol, and she hated the fact that the girl had to earn her own living almost as much as she took pride in the fact that Florence was able to earn it. Her great ambition was to have her daughter marry, not because she was mercenary but because she believed in marriage as the only genuine vocation for a woman.

"Who *do* you suppose sent them?" she repeated, all her undying hope of a romance shining in her face.

Florence, who at her first glimpse of the box had looked as confused and rosy as even her mother could have wished, now said with a little laugh of vexation: "How stupid of me! Of course I meant to have them addressed to you."

"To me!" her mother echoed, the hope dying out of her face.

"Well, I thought I could afford to give you flowers on Christmas day; you love them so," and Florence went over to her mother and put her arms around her and buried her face in her mother's neck with an unwonted demonstrativeness that was very sweet to Mrs. Acton.

When the two women had got the wooden box open with the medley of implements which women always use for such purposes, and Mrs. Acton saw the close packed ranks of roses, each firm, full bud on its long, stiff, leafy stem, she gave a cry of mingled pleasure and dismay.

"Oh, my dear," she almost wailed, "you're too good to me!" She lifted the flowers from the box. "Here's another box under the roses!" she exclaimed, putting the flowers on the table and taking out a small box which had been securely wedged into a corner of the large one. As she took it up, a flat, faint ring sounded inside.

"Why, this isn't flowers! Don't tell me that it's another present for me!"

Florence sprang forward and took the box from her mother. In her nervous grasp, a louder, clearer ring came from within. She looked at Mrs. Acton with excited eyes.

"No," she said; "it's a present for me; it's from my class. I was carrying it when I stopped on my way to the station to order your flowers. The clerk packed it with the roses to save me trouble."

She quickly untied the wrappings. The next instant a sweet clamor filled the room.

"Well, it's a lovely bell, and it was lovely of those children to give it to you," her mother said proudly; "but it's no more than you deserve."

Florence's eyes filled with tears, and she said almost fiercely: "Mother, you know I hate to have you think I'm so good."

"Well," answered Mrs. Acton, looking at her daughter with motherly concern, "at least, I know how tired you are. I do wish you didn't have to wear yourself out over those little thankless ragamuffins."

At the close of her short vacation Florence returned to New York, and a day or two later she received a note from Mrs. Athington addressed to her at the school.

"My dear Miss Acton," Mrs. Athington wrote, "will you spend next Saturday and Sunday with us? We came out here to our place on the Sound for Christmas so that the children might have that holiday in the country, and we are staying on for another week or two because it is so beautiful. I want you to come and share the beauty with us. Will you?"

Before Florence answered this note she wrote several to Arthur Athington, all of which she finally destroyed. It was late that evening when she slipped out of the boarding house to post her answer to Mrs. Athington. She wrote that it gave her great pleasure to accept that lady's invitation.

"Will you pardon me if I leave you to your own devices for a short time? These young ladies require a great deal of their mother's attention since their governess went home for the holidays." Mrs. Athington put an arm around the shoulders of each of her two young daughters, who, one at either side of her, stood with their arms entwined about her waist looking at Florence Acton with the serene, appraising gaze of childhood. "They quite wore out Miss Radford with their wicked ways, and now they are wearing their poor mother out."

Mrs. Athington gave each child a gentle squeeze to emphasize her little joke, and the children pressed their faces against their mother and smiled at Florence with pleasurable embarrassment. When they smiled, they looked like their father.

Left alone, Florence wandered over to one end of the living room where, in a sort of alcove made by a deep bow window, a Christmas tree, still wearing its Christmas raiment of gold and silver, sparkled in the morning sunshine.

She seated herself in a deep chair near the window, but the book she had taken from its shelf lay unopened in her lap while she gazed out between the embowering branches over the gradual declination of the snow-covered lawn to the wide blue stretches of the Sound.

It was Saturday, and she had arrived on an early train that morning; there were still two good hours before luncheon. Mrs. Athington had greeted her in her gentle, cordial manner, and they had had one of those talks about household affairs and near relatives that women know how to make appear intimate and personal while keeping them in reality more impersonal than a man's discussion of politics.

Her husband, Mrs. Athington said, was outdoors somewhere; he loved the country so; he was always tramping over the place. It was his boyhood's home; they hoped some day when he retired from business to live there all the year round.

Someone came into the living room, and the next instant Athington stood before Florence holding out his hand in eager welcome, smiling, handsome, glowing from his walk in the wintry air. Florence got up, a welcoming light shining in her eyes, a deeper color dyeing her cheek.

"How did you manage to steal such a march on me?" Athington began. "I have been at the station for the last half-hour waiting for you. I understood that you were due on the ten forty-seven. I was going to bundle the coachman out of the sleigh and drive you here myself. I knew that it would probably be my only chance to see you alone."

Florence reseated herself in the chair by the window and Athington remained standing before her.

"I came on the nine fifty," she said, "but you see I am alone."

"Well, you won't be alone long. Wilbur Hammond is coming to lunch."

"Mr. Hammond?" Florence frowned involuntarily.

"Do you mean that you didn't expect to see him?" Athington asked. "Don't you know that his people have a place near here, and that they are down for the holidays?"

"No. I know very little about Mr. Hammond," she replied in a tone that cut Hammond's name out of the conversation.

Athington gave a short, happy laugh. "Then if you didn't expect to see *him*," he said eagerly, "may I hope that you expected to see *me*? That you are willing to remove the awful barriers you imposed? That we may take up our companionship again?"

"Yes, I came because I wanted to see you."

Athington, with another happy laugh, drew a chair near hers and sat down.

"Well, now, I call that lovely of you," he said. "I can't tell you how much I've wanted to see *you*," he added, becoming serious and looking at her with eyes that were suddenly softer and darker.

Florence's eyes fell under his gaze, but in an instant she raised them and said impatiently: "You mustn't send me any more flowers—you mustn't send me anything. You've made me lie to my mother; you've made me act as though I were doing wrong. It was to tell you this that I came out here."

"Oh, but to send you flowers was my only comfort. I saw you with Hammond one day, and I couldn't bear that he should walk and talk with you while I couldn't even write. Then I thought of sending you flowers. I didn't promise not to send you flowers."

"I didn't dream that you would send them. Our friendship wasn't of a sentimental sort."

"But you kept the bell," Athington insisted. "I thought, since you did *that*, everything was all right."

"I kept the bell because it was easier to keep it than send it back. Besides, I had to tell my mother that my pupils gave it to me. It would have worried

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her terribly if I'd told her the truth. She wouldn't understand. I wanted to write you all this, but I knew if I did you would answer; and I finally decided that it would be best to see you and close the matter once for all. Moreover, it would give Mrs. Athington a chance to see us together, to see that we care nothing for each other in the way she thinks we do."

Athington got up and stood looking down at her for a moment before he said sadly: "Then our friendship is absolutely at an end?"

"Absolutely," Florence repeated firmly, looking up at him.

"But it meant so much to me!" he persisted. "It was like no other friendship I had ever had."

"It was my ideal, as I told you," she said. "But it wouldn't be my ideal if we continued to see each other now that I know Mrs. Athington is jealous. I want to keep it perfect. I want you to promise that you will never try to communicate with me in any way."

Athington made no immediate answer. He gazed at her in silence. Then he held out his hand as if in mute ratification of the promise she asked of him. Florence rose and put her hand in his; but at the touch his promise dissolved, his fingers tightened over her fingers, his eyes sought her eyes; her eyes wavered and fell; her color deepened and faded; he drew her toward him; she stiffened with resistance. The next instant she relinquished herself to him in a surrender as absolute as her purposed renunciation.

A slight sound in the living room caused Athington to look behind him. "Julia!" he cried in a voice of terror.

Florence, with one swift glance over his shoulder, sprang from his embrace.

Mrs. Athington advanced toward them through the wide archway that connected the living room with the extension. She kept her eyes on her husband; she was very pale.

"I didn't know that you were in the house," she began. "I thought when I heard a man's voice that it was Wilbur Hammond. I didn't mean to listen; I didn't mean to see."

Florence, with a sort of moan, covered her face with her hands and sank into a chair.

"Don't look so frightened," Mrs. Athington went on to her husband almost soothingly. "I'm not going to make a scene. I knew this moment would come some time. I determined long ago what I would do when it did come."

She swayed on her feet for an instant. Her husband hurried to her with a chair and took her by the arm to keep her from falling; but she refused to sit down, and steadied herself by a hand on the chair back.

"But I haven't known Miss Acton a long time," Athington said weakly as if this fact somehow helped his case.

"I don't mean, of course, that I knew it would be Miss Acton; but I knew from the first year of our marriage that some time I should find out that you loved another woman. I determined then what I would do."

Athington's face went suddenly even whiter than his wife's. "Julia!" he cried. "What in heaven's name do you mean?"

At the horror in his tone, a queer smile of comprehension crossed her face. "I don't mean what you mean," she said. "I was a very selfish, cowardly woman when I threatened to kill myself that first year of our marriage because I had found out that you admired other women in spite of being married to me. Ever since then I have striven to wipe out the shame of that moment; I have tried to leave you perfectly free; I have asked no explanations; and when you have given them unasked, I have made no comment. When I saw that you admired a woman, I have thrown you with her where I could see you together and thus test myself. It wasn't easy at first, but I believe now that I shall never again suffer the awful degradation of jealousy." A light of exaltation came into her eyes; she looked from her husband to the bowed figure of the girl. "I will not stand between you two." She turned again to Athington. "You must marry her. I will get a divorce."

"A divorce!" Athington echoed with an increase of horror.

"Do you think I want to keep you tied to me when you no longer love me?" she asked.

Athington's bewilderment was almost pathetic. He could have coped with an exposure which brought in its train the tears and passion of a jealous woman; explanations and protestations would, in the end, work their way toward a reconciliation; but on this high ground that his wife had taken he could find no foothold; it quaked beneath him like a quicksand.

"But you can't get a divorce just because you think I don't love you!" he said, using his masculine logic to oppose obstacles to his wife's action.

"Divorces can be got on any pretext in some of those Western States," Mrs. Athington replied.

"Julia! Do you realize what a divorce would mean? Think of the children! It would mean that one or the other of us would have to give up our children."

Mrs. Athington's face flamed with a sudden color that, subsiding, left it paler than before. Her eyes darkened; she breathed more rapidly. It was clear that she had not conquered the emotion of jealousy in all its phases.

"The children are mine," she said. "I will never give them up—never. But I would leave you everything else," she added. "This home you care so much for must always be yours. I should go abroad with the children."

"But think of the disgrace!"

"The real disgrace would be in living together when we no longer love each other."

"But I *do* love you!" Athington's tone was so hopeless that there could be no doubt of his sincerity. There was none of the fervor of insincerity; he had shot all his bolts and he stated a truth just because it was the truth. "I have never loved any other woman," he added.

A faint color came into Mrs. Athington's face; she looked at Florence and then at her husband and shook her head. Something in her look caused him sud-

denly to feel firmer ground beneath his feet.

"Do you think a man is in love with every pretty woman he admires?" Athington, even through his fear of losing Julia, was conscious of a pang for Florence. She had to be sacrificed, but he wished that she might have been absent from the immolation; motionless, unseeing, silent, she indeed had the effect of being absent. "If you weren't so good," he went on, "you'd understand that men can admire women without loving them, and, admiring them, it's inevitable to want admiration in return. But love—that's a very different matter. Oh, Julia, won't you forgive me? Won't you believe that I love you?"

Mrs. Athington glanced away from him as if ashamed to see the fear and selfishness that distorted his handsome features; when she looked at him again, there had come into her eyes that cold, clear light, that detached vision in which a woman sees the man she loves as if she no longer loved him.

"I do believe you," she said, "but I almost wish I didn't."

"You don't want me to love you?" Athington cried incredulously.

"I want to respect you." Her voice trembled with the pain of her disillusion. "If you had ceased to love me because you loved some other woman, I could still respect you; but to win a woman's love for the satisfaction of a shallow vanity is contemptible. Can't you see what you've done to her?" She gave a fierce little nod of her head toward Florence Acton.

Before Athington could reply to this, Florence simultaneously uncovered her face and sprang to her feet. There was no trace of the hopeless abandon with which she had thrown herself into the chair. She drew herself to her full height; her eyes blazed as she looked at Athington while addressing his wife.

"If you mean that he has made me love him," she said, "you are mistaken. I despise him."

For a moment, the lightninglike glance of her contempt flashed about Athington's defenseless head. He tried

to meet her gaze, but his eyes wavered and he turned away. Florence went swiftly over to Mrs. Athington.

"I can never tell you," she said, "how much I admire you. You are the noblest woman I have ever known." Suddenly her self-control broke down; her face was convulsed with a gust of stormy tears. "But oh," she wailed, "how I despise myself!"

Before Mrs. Athington could stop her, she ran out of the room.

In the hall, outside the living room door, Florence collided with Wilbur Hammond. She would have brushed past him without speaking, but one look at her face made him stop her and hold her by the arm.

"What's the matter? Are you ill? Have you had bad news?"

Florence freed herself from him and went toward the front door. She put her hand on the knob. "I am going home," she said. "I must go at once."

"But you can't go without coat or hat. You can't walk to the station," Hammond said soothingly. He saw that something had happened which had left her stunned. "You must let me take you to the train; my horse isn't unharnessed yet. You get your wraps on, and by the time you're ready I shall be waiting for you."

He went to the stable himself and got his horse. When he again entered the hall, Mrs. Athington stood at the foot of the stairs which Florence, in cloak and hat, was descending, followed by a maid with her bag. The girl looked composed but very miserable.

"I feel sure, Miss Acton," Mrs. Athington said, "that she is not as ill as the telegram has led you to fear. Telegrams are so terrifying. I am so sorry to have you leave almost before you get here," she added, holding out her hand in farewell as Florence reached the bottom step. Florence made no attempt to strengthen the explanation with which her hostess sought to screen her from the curiosity of the maid and the bewilderment of Hammond.

"You won't go away?" Florence said pleadingly. "You won't go abroad?"

Mrs. Athington, before she replied, asked Hammond if he would show the maid where to put the bag. When Florence and she were alone, she said: "No, I will not go abroad. I will never leave him."

Florence searched the elder woman's face. "Are you staying only for the sake of the children—and for his sake? Forgive me for asking, but it seems to me that I could never know a moment's peace if I thought you were staying merely from a sense of duty, and that all your happiness was at an end."

Mrs. Athington looked for an instant as though she thought Florence *had* asked more than she had any right to; then her face softened into the sweetness and serenity that was her characteristic expression.

"If a woman cares enough for a man to *leave* him because she believes he cares for another woman," she said, "don't you see—" She paused and looked at the girl with her level gaze, faintly smiling.

Florence took her up. "She will care enough to *stay* with him when she finds out he still cares for her? I see."

Hammond's horse and sleigh had gone some distance down the driveway before the young man turned to Florence.

"I trust that it isn't your mother who is ill," he said.

"My mother?" she queried, starting from the abstraction into which she had fallen upon leaving the house. "No, my mother isn't ill."

"I'm very glad of that," Hammond said and waited for her to enlighten him further, but she seemed to relapse into her inner communing. He felt that it would be kinder not to force her to talk, so he remained silent.

Suddenly she startled him by reverting to his question. "No friend of mine is ill," she said. "Mrs. Athington pretended someone was to excuse my going away so abruptly."

"Oh!" said Hammond blankly. "I see."

He waited for her to tell him what he saw, but she said no more until presently she broke out again: "Mrs. Athington saw her husband kiss me. Of

course she couldn't tell *you* that *that* was the reason I was leaving."

The horse, in response to Hammond's involuntary jerk on the reins, sprang forward and for a moment required all the young man's attention. When the pace had again become normal, Hammond, overcome with sympathy for Florence and condemnation of Athington, and feeling the girl's terrible position too much even to glance at her, could only murmur: "Oh, if only I hadn't asked Mrs. Athington to invite you! But I wanted so to see you. I ought to have known Athington well enough—"

Florence interrupted him, her voice ringing with self-contempt. "Don't think that I was Mr. Athington's victim. I wasn't."

Hammond turned and stared at her; she met his gaze with defiant eyes. He felt his condemnation of Athington rise to engulf her, too. Under the pain of the revelation, his love for her seemed to become hate.

"It was shameful of you to accept Julia's invitation when you knew you cared for her husband. It was despicable."

Florence met his scorn with a slight smile. "Isn't it a satisfaction for you to know that you were right and I was wrong about platonic friendships?" she asked.

"A satisfaction!" Hammond groaned.

By this time they had come in sight of the station, and Hammond spoke only once more before he drew up beside the platform.

"What is Julia going to do?" he asked.

"Nothing," Florence answered laconically.

"But since she knows that her husband—" he began.

"She knows that her husband cares more for her than he ever did. She knows that he never cared for anyone else."

"Oh!" cried the young man with a look of pity at the girl. "How contemptible he is!"

The train which had whistled at the next village now came in sight around a curve. Hammond held out his hand.

"Good-bye," he said, and then he added as if the words were forced from him: "I must see you again. May I call at your school, at your boarding place?"

Florence flushed. "But I told you—what I told you—so that you wouldn't *want* to see me again. I wanted you to know me as I really am." Her scorn of herself shone in her brown eyes. Hammond had never seen her look so lovely. It seemed to him that her frank avowal was the most honorable thing he had ever heard of.

"I *do* know you as you really are," he said, his plain, pleasant face glowing with his faith.

The train rushed past them and the locomotive came to an impatient, quivering pause further up the track. Hammond and Florence hurried forward, but before they reached the steps of the car, she turned to him.

"There's one thing about me you think you know that you *don't* know," she said. "You think I care for him."

She sprang up the steps of the car. Hammond would have followed, but she wouldn't let him.

"And you *don't*?" he asked, regardless of the conductor, who, at the foot of the steps, cried, "All aboard!" with a glance at Hammond.

Florence didn't answer him. She vanished inside the car with a "Good-bye."



A SHADY past usually precludes a sunny future.

THE PSALM OF THE SUFFRAGETTE

By WALTER S. TRUMBULL

SHOW me not with scornful numbers,
 You've too many voters now!
Woman, wakened from her slumbers,
 Wants the ballot anyhow.

Life with Bill or life with Ernest
 Is no more our destined goal.
Man thou art; to man thou turnest;
 But we, too, demand the poll.

Not enjoyment, naught but sorrow,
 Is the legislator's way;
For we'll get to him tomorrow
 If he should escape today.

Art's expensive, styles are fleeting;
 Let our lace-edged banners wave,
Thus inscribed, o'er every meeting;
 "Give us suffrage or the grave."

Heroines, prepare for battle!
 Lend your efforts to the strife!
Drive all husbands forth like cattle;
 Be a woman, not a wife!

Trust no man, however pleasant.
 He'll agree to all you say,
Send you candy as a present,
 Go and vote the other way.

Wives of great men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
And preceding, leave behind us
 All the rest at dinner time. .

Let us, then, be up and doing,
 Don the trousers and the coat;
For our candidate pursuing
 The elusive, nimble vote.

THE POINT OF VIEW

By RICHARD ELY DANIELSON

L ATE one afternoon in the Christmas vacation of my Junior year I saw Wharton Bond on the Avenue. He was helping two ladies into a carriage, and his face as usual glowed with sentiments proper to the occasion. The mournful expression of his hands implied that all happiness went out of his life with their departure. As the coachman swung them out into the river of carriages and motors, he saw me and waved his stick by way of signal.

"Hello, Billy Defrees," he called. "You're sent straight from Heaven, and I'm awfully glad to see you."

I said that I was glad to see him, and I was. You couldn't help liking the man even if he snubbed you, and if he made any effort to please you you became his slave. He had the devil's own charm, with his confounded good looks, his assured manner, his quick, glowing talk—his general invincibility, if you know what I mean. Few men, even if they didn't admire him, and never a woman in the world but felt the magic of his attraction. And he was a clever chap, wonderfully clever and mysteriously effective with people. It was disturbing, this faculty of his. You wouldn't introduce him to your fiancée, if you had one, for he would cut you out at the altar. At college we feared him, admired and distrusted his ability, disliked him violently at times for cause—and dumbly worshiped him. He held us in the hollow of his hand. He would talk on in his easy, cynical, iconoclastic way till great stupid oafs like me would admit in sheer panic that two and two made seventeen. He could make black seem white, and the worse the better reason, as the accusers said of Socrates,

you remember, in the "Phædo." And I dare say that by some he would have been called a corrupter of youth, as Socrates was. For nothing in the world was sacred to him. He said and did things that I hated, if half was true that I heard or guessed. I always said they were lies to his enemies, for as I've said, I couldn't help liking Wharton Bond.

He said to me: "I'm just back from a month down South—sick excuse, you know. And there are four million people in New York I don't want to dine with. You are the odd one, and if you tell me that you have an engagement for dinner I shall go off, get quietly drunk and lie down in front of a motor bus."

I had an engagement, but I knew that I should do what he wanted, and besides, I was flattered at being picked out of four million people.

"Where shall we dine?" I asked.

"The always practical Defrees!" he said, with a note of real admiration in his voice. "You are splendid. No beatings about the bush, but quick, nervous, vital prose. 'Where shall we eat?' An epigram! Well, you may glut your carnivorous oarsman's appetite at any place you name."

"I don't care what place," said I, "as long as it's not Bohemian. Bohemian places always smell like a circus, and they give you one dead sardine, red spaghetti and pink wine."

"But think," said he, "of the dear Bohemians themselves, a poet who comes from Yonkers and therefore drinks absinthe, two respectable married people of certain age being delightfully wicked, and perhaps some fellow collegians seeing life and having a helluva time."

"No," I said. "It sounds fascinating,

but it's unfair to your 'innards' to eat that sardine and drink that wine."

I know a good deal about bum restaurants. Bob Davis, of my class, who is keen on "atmosphere" and "all sorts and conditions of men," is always dragging me to places where the waiter wipes off the table with his apron and says through his teeth: "Well, gents, what's yours?" He took me once to a German or Yiddish place, by George, where they offered us pig's feet and tripe for the first course of a *table d'hôte*. I said to him firmly: "No, Bob, I am amiable and kindly, a plain, blunt man that loves my friend, but I draw the line at feet and *viscera*." And Bob said to the waiter: "Slaughter an ox and bring Mr. Defrees a thin slice from the thigh." Our troubles began right there, culminating in a plucky and well organized retreat before an avalanche of infuriated Polacks. I said that the only good thing I knew about Poland was its partition, when it was between me and the Poles, and that I was going back to New Haven to get something to eat.

Well, all that's in the past. We ended up—Wharton Bond and I—by dining at the Beaux Arts, in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously. He could order a dinner and wines with an art that made a New York waiter fairly grovel. In my Junior year I thought that about the finest accomplishment a man could have. It made him seem so much a man of the world. I ate and drank in speechless admiration. Every once in a while he would beckon to the waiter. "A little more Burgundy, please." I floated on a purple cloud.

And he talked. He talked of everything, men, women and things, with always the right word, the one illuminating phrase at the tip of his tongue. He made you see pictures in the smoke. I would say, "By George!" or "Fancy that!" and never try to stick my oar into the conversation. In fact, I think the reason he liked me was because I was such a good listener. And I have always thought he was a great conversationalist—like Dr. Johnson. He had a golden tongue. At college he never did any work; he despised work and

cut recitations when he pleased, but his cleverness and his grand manner and his incomparable tongue made him solid with the faculty and the Dean's office.

Toward the end of the dinner he leaned across the table and said: "Do you know, I've seven-eighths of a mind to try an experiment, and play a new game with you. I was at a house party in Virginia last week, where we played an imbecile game, an insane game, called 'Truth.' You all swear, take an oath, men and girls, to give a true answer to any question that is asked you. Think of it, a true answer! We sat in the dark around the biggest fireplace south of Baltimore, and played it out. It was very interesting as a novel experience. Some lied, of course, but you could always tell that they were lying. And the darkness hid the blushes, and perhaps the tears, so that nearly all spoke more truly than they knew. Psychologically, as an object lesson in the feminine nature, it was distinctly interesting, but it developed into a damnable game. Some cat of a girl would ask you if you loved some other girl there present, and you had either to lie like a gentleman and incriminate yourself for life, or say no; and then the girl in question would begin to boo-hoo softly on her dear friend's shoulder. I may say with all feeling it was a hell of a game. Have you ever played it?"

"No," I said; "hardly."

"Well," he said, "people will tell you the truth about yourself when they're angry at you or in love with you, the two plain spoken passions, but never in cold blood will they tell you the exact truth. We did the other night, and it was quite interesting. My experiment would be that you and I do just that—I tell you what I think about you, and you can retaliate on me."

"But that will be so disagreeable for me," said I.

"Oh," he said, "I'll try to be kind."

"Thanks," said I rather stiffly.

He lit a cigarette as the waiter set a tray of cordials on the table. "In the first place," said he, "I thoroughly enjoy your company because I thor-

oughly enjoy your mind. You have a magnificently push button mind. It is a straightforward mind, working in a straight line, never branching out into the delightful ramifications of the subtle. You never see a thing from half a dozen angles at the same time; you don't analyze motives, study men and women, follow the workings of their minds—and yours. You miss all the pleasure and all the pain of the dual ego point of view that makes a man a spectator of himself, makes him weep at his own laughter and laugh at his own tears. You always act in a straight line, because you always see things in a straight line. Your point of view depends entirely upon your training, your prejudices; and they are, if you will let me say so, perfectly and beautifully middle class. They are the heritage of your English forbears. They are excellent, of course, and estimable; they smack of fox hunting and 'the King, God bless him,' trim cottages, vicars, and public schools. You know what you think about everything, and everyone else knows what you think about everything. Now I have never known what I think about anything. I adopt certain opinions for the sake of convenience, but I always laugh at myself for doing so. You actually believe your commonplaces, and I think I like you for it."

He blew a thoughtful ring of smoke at the flask of Chartreuse. Then he smiled quickly.

"You know," he said, "I'm a great admirer of the commonplace. That's why I like you. I like your prejudices, your great oarsman's appetite, your respectability, your healthy, push button mind. You are so wholly to be expected. One can always tell what you are thinking, how you will think, what you are going to say next. Some people might find it dull; I find it very fascinating. I know, for instance, just how angry you are at this moment because I have called you commonplace."

"Well," said I, thoroughly annoyed, "I confess that I didn't realize that your game was merely a new method of insulting a man."

"That's it," he cried, bringing his hand down on the table. "That's just exactly what you ought to have said to be in character. You're simply perfect."

He was so sincerely delighted with his own powers of observation that half my resentment melted away, but only half. "It's my turn now," I said.

He laughed and ducked behind an upraised arm. "Up, Guards, and at them!" he cried. "Leave my jaw alone and push in my slats! A gem of prose," he explained, "from the advice of Mrs. Fitzsimmons to her intrepid husband."

"In the first place," said I, "I know that you're unexpected and infernally clever and uncommonplace, and all that sort of thing; and I know, too, that you've got a way with you that few people have, but there are some things about you that I don't like and don't understand. I don't see, for instance, how a man of your ability can spend four years at New Haven and not do a blooming thing for the university or for yourself, not even study."

"Stop there a minute," he said. "The only thing in college worth studying is what they used to call the Humanities. And I've studied them—I've studied them, but not in books."

"I dare say," said I. "And there's another thing I don't like in you, that's harder to talk about. I happen to know that you made love to two or three girls at the same prom. And because you're so damned attractive one of them cried her eyes out when you never answered her letter."

"But I merely wanted to see," he said, "if she would answer mine. And she did. I thought she would."

"That must have been an interesting experiment!" said I with a heavy sneer.

"It was," he answered, smiling, quite unabashed.

"That only shows," I said, "how selfish you are, and how conceited and how thoughtless."

He smiled again. "I'll admit," he said, "to selfishness. At bottom, you know, we are all absolutely selfish, only some of us pretend not to be. But I am not quite thoughtless. I know what is going to happen in the *jeune fille* mind

and I am convinced that it might as well happen early as late. And, of course, I'm conceited. I will admit freely that I am the most fascinating, the most seductive of men. I always tell the ladies that side of the case; it is part of my method. And the fun of the thing is to see how they will act after I have told them that I am invincible. Their behavior is a complete exposition of their minds and natures. Some of them think it's funny; others think that their mission in life is to reduce my conceit; others—"

"I know," I interrupted; "and it always ends the same way. But why in the world do you do it?"

"I suppose," said he slowly, "because it interests me. It's really infinitely interesting. All women are fools, of course, as most men are, but you can never tell just what they are going to do next. So I experiment—"

"Did it ever strike you," I interrupted again, "that you're experimenting with pretty dangerous materials—not only flesh, but hearts and souls and all that sort of thing?"

"Of course," he said; "that's what makes it interesting."

I began heavily: "You remember Browning's poem we read last term—'It's an awkward thing to play with souls'—"

He capped my quotation: "'And matter enough to save one's own.' Yes, my moralist, but it is so much better fun to play with somebody else's soul than to bother around trying to save your own." And he smiled at me in his superior, tantalizing way.

I hadn't found it easy to talk in this way, and I'm no moralist, heaven knows, but that smile of his made me downright mad. I almost pounded the table. "That's mighty poor business," I said, "mighty poor business!" I was a little ashamed of this outburst, and I went on more quietly: "I don't mean to say, because I don't believe it, that you are downright immoral—"

He threw back his head and laughed aloud. "Thank you," he said. "You are delicious!"

"But," I kept on doggedly, "I'll tell

you what I saw one night last winter. I was taking a run through the streets before turning in, and out by East Rock I saw you talking with some New Haven shopgirl. She had her arms around your neck and was laughing and crying at the same time. I didn't wait to see or hear. I didn't want to. With all your training, with all your conquests and your magnificence and everything, you seemed pretty small and pretty cowardly to make a fool out of that silly girl. That you, a gentleman, a man I liked, a friend of mine, should do that sort of thing!"

"Why not?" he asked.

"Why not?" I repeated. "Why, man, you can't marry them, and the alternatives are despicable. I tell you, a gentleman can't make love out of his own class."

"What's a gentleman?" he asked, tapping a cigarette quietly on his case.

"You're one by birth and breeding. So am I. And your finer feelings—"

"What are your finer feelings?"

"You know as well as I do," said I. "They're your—er—your morals."

"I don't believe for a moment," said he, "in your ticketing humanity in gentleman and non-gentleman classes. And I don't know what finer feelings are. If you mean conventions—but what's the use of discussing that? I won't beg the question. I will simply stand by my inalienable right of doing what I want to do, anyhow."

"But why do you do it?" I repeated.

"Because it's fascinating and instructive. I learn human nature. I discover the truth of the platitude about Judy O'Grady and the Colonel's Lady. I see different strata of humanity, from the feminine side."

"That's not why you do it," I said brutally. For the first time I saw that he was lying and that he knew he was lying. And my respect for his ability and my liking for himself fell down and died.

"No-o," he was saying. "That's not the whole reason. It's partly the lure of the thing, the battle of sex. It's a wonderful game. You only have your empty 'social classes' rot when you're talking. There are no social classes when

you're making love. All women are made to be followed, loved, fought for, overcome. It's the object of their lives. They stoop to be conquered—all of them! And there's as much invitation, daring, defiance, flight in the eyes of a shopgirl as there is in the eyes of a countess."

He laughed his cynical, sneering laugh. "You quoted poetry to me," he said. "I'll tell you the truest thing that any poet ever said: 'Every woman is at heart a rake.' Now I—"

He was warming to his theme, and I was wondering how I had ever let myself become his guest, when some people at a table behind him rose and started for the door. One of them was a girl whom I had noticed before and watched, more or less, all through the evening. She wasn't exactly beautiful, you know, but she was more than that. She had gray eyes, and she looked straight before her and held her head high. She had the flush of life and youth in her cheeks and the frank laughter of innocence on her lips. In that smoky, noisy, garish place, with its blue-jowled, sated men and unreal, painted women, she was as out of her element as a—as a dryad would have been. Yet she was unconscious of any strangeness, thoroughly enjoying it all and quite unafraid. She made me think of apple blossoms, somehow, I don't know why.

As she passed our table she looked at Bond, stopped, and as he rose to his feet surprised, she held out her hand to him in the simplest, nicest, friendliest way in the world.

"Why, Wharton Bond!" she said. "You stranger! I haven't seen you for years!"

"No," he stammered, "not for years."

"Well," she said, "it's so awfully nice to see you now, that I hope you will be neighborly and come to see us at Simsbury.—Yes, mother, I'm coming.—I've a new pony to show you and some splendid wolfhounds. You will come and pay us a visit, won't you?"

After she had gone Wharton sat down slowly, like a man somewhat dazed. He was plainly shaken in some way by the meeting. He passed his hand once or twice mechanically through his hair.

"An old friend," he said, "of my—sister."

Then fiercely to me: "Did she hear what I said? Do you think she could hear?"

"No," I said, "I don't think that she could hear."

He settled down, hunched up, in his chair, and stared at the ashes and stumps in the trays, the tumbled, disordered napkins and the stains of spilled wine on the cloth. He stared for some time in silence. I noticed that his face was almost as white as the napkins, and that there were long deep lines running down past the corners of his mouth. Then he said bitterly to himself: "What a liar I am!"

And a little later, having forgotten me, and speaking so low that I could hardly hear him: "Oh, my God! Why didn't I die then? Why didn't I die?"



MR. SNAPP—Life is full of contradictions.
MRS. SNAPP—And I say it isn't!

GO, LITTLE BOOK

By J. GILBERT

GO, little book;
Win from my dear one's eyes one pleased look."
Thus did the poet of old time essay
The dedication of his am'rous lay,
That so his love might speed his halting verse
To reach his lady's heart, howe'er perverse.

Ah, me! What changes in the ways of men!
Today, with lover's zeal, I grasp my pen;
But 'tis to sign one more of those large cheques
Which Nancy's violets weekly turn to wrecks.
The cheque pad thins; I sigh with ling'ring look.
"Go, little book."



WHEN a woman holds a man in the hollow of her hand she can palm off any kind of talk on him.



ALL you've got to do is to stir some people up to have them boil over.



FLATTERY is a sort of bad money to which our vanity gives currency.



SOCIAL fame lasts as long as the possessor is present.

THE HULKS*

By JAMES FARRINGTON

CHARACTERS

JEAN DUVAL (*an ex-convict*)
MARIE DUVAL (*his wife*)
PHILIP LE BLANC (*her brother*)
M. BERNARD (*a money lender*)
A BRIGADIER OF GENDARMES

TIME: About 1800

PLACE: Paris

SCENE—*A room in the DUVAL HOUSE. The furnishings indicate bitter poverty but everything is spotless. A battered table in the center, on which there are some dishes, a cupboard at the right and two chairs constitute the furniture. In the back wall a door opens to the street; at the left another door leads into an inner room; further back on the left is an open fireplace, in which there are ashes of a dead fire. Between this and the outer door is a window looking out on the road. Beneath this window is a long bench. It is an afternoon in early winter; the light fades into twilight.*

In the inner room someone is heard coughing—unmistakably a consumptive. Mme. Duval enters at the left. She is a woman of middle age, tired and worn looking. She closes the door gently. The coughing recommences. She leans against the closed door, her left hand thrown to her breast as though to hold back a cry.

MADAME DUVAL

Ah, if only he did not cough! It hurts him so. The doctor has said he cannot last long—but if only he did not cough. I am sure it would be better. (*She goes to the table and busies herself setting away the dishes in the cupboard.* A knock is heard at the outer door. *She starts in terror. She hesitates and glances at the door of the sick room, then moves toward the outer door, but before she can reach it it is opened and PHILIP LEBLANC enters. He is a little man and his left leg is crippled.*)

MADAME DUVAL

Ah, it is you, Philip! You startled me. I—I thought—

PHILIP

The gendarmes? They will be here soon.

MADAME DUVAL

To—arrest Paul?

PHILIP

To arrest Paul.

MADAME DUVAL

Then M. Bernard—

* Dramatic rights reserved.

PHILIP

Yes, he went straight to the Prefect. I followed and watched. He has a warrant by this time. They should be here soon.

MADAME DUVAL

But, Paul, he is dying. They will not take him when he is dying.

PHILIP

They will take him.

MADAME DUVAL

Oh, they will not—they cannot! They must not take him when he is dying!

(*PHILIP shrugs his shoulders helplessly and sits by the table at the right. MADAME DUVAL stands at the left.*)

MADAME DUVAL (*glancing away*)
Philip!

PHILIP

Yes?

MADAME DUVAL (*moving toward him, her head down*)

Paul, he—(*She hesitates.*)

PHILIP

Well?

MADAME DUVAL (*lowering her voice*)
He is guilty. He took the money.

PHILIP (*starting up*)
Paul? Paul? He stole—

MADAME DUVAL

S—sh! Yes, he took it. It was last night. We had had nothing to eat for days—except what you could give us. He was desperate, ill—no work. Old Bernard owed him a little money. He could not get it. He went to Bernard's shop. He broke in. He meant to take but what belonged to him, but there was so much. He took twenty francs. There was much more. While he was there old Bernard came in. He rushed at Paul, struck at him with his stick, cutting his hand here. (*Touching her left hand.*) Paul broke away and rushed out, knocking Bernard down. It was very dark. He thought old Bernard did not know him.

PHILIP

When did Paul tell you this?

MADAME DUVAL

Just now—after Bernard left. Paul came straight home. He poured the money in my lap and told me to get food and wine. He was excited and weak from losing so much blood. He would not tell me—he said he borrowed the money. I knew it could not be true, but I was too overjoyed to ask questions. One does not ask when one is hungry. Besides, Paul was very ill. His cough got worse; I put him to bed and hurried out to get the food and wine and medicine. So the money went. This morning we had the doctor. That took the last of it. He looked at Paul. He said he could not last long—Then (*With an outburst of passion*) old Bernard came. You know. (*She seats herself at the table, staring at the dead fire, her hands clasped in her lap.*)

PHILIP

Yes, I know.

MADAME DUVAL (*slowly*)

And now they will arrest Paul. (*Starting up.*) But no, they must not arrest him—they must not take him. We must find some way. Ten years ago they took his father, poor Jean. They took him—my husband—and he is now in the galleys. But they must not take Paul. They would make him a convict, too, and send him to Toulon. But he would never reach there. He would die on the road or in jail awaiting his sentence, and his father would come home to find his son had died a thief—a thief and a convict. First the father, now the son, a thief and a convict. But they must not arrest him; they must not send him to join his father at Toulon; he must not die in jail. We must save him; surely there is some way.

PHILIP (*helplessly*)

You know old Bernard. He loves money. If we could return the money Paul took we could save him, but that is impossible—it is gone. Bernard knows that and he will insist on Paul's arrest.

MADAME DUVAL

Twenty francs, brother, think—only twenty francs between my son and

prison. It is so little, twenty francs. You know how quickly it went, and he might have taken much more. They took his father; they must not take him. We must find the money, Philip, we must.

PHILIP

But how? I am a cripple. I earn little, and have my own to support. I cannot help you. There is nothing left to sell here; these poor sticks, who would buy them?

(MADAME DUVAL returns to her seat facing the fire, her hands in her lap as before. PHILIP sits staring at the floor.)

MADAME DUVAL (to herself)

Only twenty francs. (Starting.) There is a way! Jean! In the galleys! He could help us.

PHILIP

Eh?

MADAME DUVAL

If we could get word to him, to Toulon!

PHILIP

To Toulon? For what?

MADAME DUVAL

To Jean, in the galleys. You know the convicts get a little money for their work. Felix Minot, who served eight years, had over fifty francs when he was released. I know—Raoul, his brother, told me. He, Jean, has been there now—nine, ten years. Yes, it was ten years last month. He must have saved much more than that.

PHILIP

Ten years! But that was his sentence.

MADAME DUVAL

Yes, yes! His term was supposed to be up a month ago, but, who knows, it may have been lengthened for misbehavior, or he may be sick. I have heard from him only twice in all the time he has been gone. But he must be there yet, or on his way home if he has been released. If only we could get Bernard to allow Paul to remain here until we get word to Toulon, or, better yet, if the good God would send Jean home now, in time to save his son!

PHILIP

Bah! Why hope for miracles?

MADAME DUVAL

Yes, I know, but—

PHILIP (wearily)

All we can do is wait. They should be here soon.

(The coughing recommences. MADAME DUVAL rises and moves toward the door of the bedroom, while PHILIP remains motionless in his seat by the table, so that neither sees the figure that passes the window until his knock is heard at the door. PHILIP rises and hobbles quickly to the window. MADAME DUVAL remains by the door of the inner room.)

MADAME DUVAL

The gendarmes?

PHILIP (at the window)

I cannot see. It seems but one.

(The knock is repeated. PHILIP moves to the door and opens it. A rough-looking man is standing without. He looks at PHILIP.)

PHILIP

What do you want?

THE MAN

This is the home of Marie Duval?

PHILIP

Yes. What do you want?

(The man enters. PHILIP makes way for him hastily, as if afraid. The man is formidable in appearance. He is clad in blouse, trousers and coarse shoes. A cap is pulled over his face, half concealing it. He carries a knapsack and a heavy stick. A bandage can be seen bound about his head as if he had been cut. He eyes MADAME DUVAL steadily for a moment, then looks back at PHILIP without speaking.)

THE MAN

You do not know me?

(Both stare. He pulls the cap from his head revealing his face. MADAME DUVAL cries out loudly. PHILIP stares wonderingly.)

PHILIP (incredulously)

It can't be. Yes, it is!

THE MAN

Jean Duval, Convict Number Nine Thousand and Forty-seven, just released from the galleys at Toulon.

MADAME DUVAL

Jean!

JEAN

I have walked far today. I am hungry and tired.

MADAME DUVAL

Ah, the good God has heard my prayer! The miracle has happened!

(JEAN DUVAL moves from his position by the door toward the bench. As he passes MADAME DUVAL she seems about to embrace him, but he glances at her dully and she restrains herself. He lays his knapsack and cudgel on the bench and seats himself heavily. He slouches forward, his arms on his knees, his head hanging. The other two watch him in silence.)

JEAN (without raising his head)
Have you anything to eat?

MADAME DUVAL (starting)

Yes, yes, of course. (She hastily lays out dishes and food.) God be thanked, I knew there would be a way. I knew he would not desert us. My prayers were heard and answered. I asked for a miracle and it has happened. (She beckons to JEAN, who arises and shambles to the table, seats himself at the right and eats greedily.)

MADAME DUVAL (standing)

You have come just in time, Jean. We never needed you so much as now.

PHILIP

It seems like a miracle.

MADAME DUVAL (piously)
It is the will of God.

JEAN (without interest)

What is?

MADAME DUVAL

That you should have come just now—in time to save Paul. But finish eating and then I will tell you.

(Another cough is heard.)

JEAN (looking up)

What is that?

(MADAME DUVAL goes into the other room.)

PHILIP

It is Paul, your son.

JEAN

Paul? He was the eldest. He is sick?

PHILIP (softly)
He is dying.

JEAN (listening until the coughing ceases)

Yes, he is dying. I heard a cough like that once before. It was in the galley. One we called the Rat. He did not last long. He coughed like that. (To PHILIP.) And the others, Marcellene and Florette—they, too, must be grown. Where are they?

PHILIP (in a low voice)
Both gone. The cold and the hunger took them both.

JEAN

Aye, ten years is a long time.

(MADAME DUVAL is heard returning.)

PHILIP

Hush! She does not like it spoken of.

MADAME DUVAL (entering)

Listen, Jean; Paul, our son Paul, is dying. He has stolen some money. He is in danger of arrest. The gendarmes are on the way here now—I will tell you about it; it will not take long. After you were—after you went away—it was hard at first, but I was strong and healthy, not broken and old as I am now, and by working hard we managed to get along—with the aid of Philip. I struggled on for a few years, but the children were growing up and it took more and more to feed and clothe them. At last I was taken sick. I could not do much, and I had to put Paul out to work. He was quite strong then; he worked in the fields. But he was young; he could not earn much. Marcelline died; we grew poorer. Florette soon followed. Then the work got too hard for Paul; he was too young and he got the cough. When that came he lost strength fast, and could not do the work. So he had to leave.

There is no place in the fields for those who are weak. He tried to get work in the shops, the only work he could do, but he had little schooling—his father was a—convict; his cough, his clothes, everything was against him. So he went from place to place taking whatever he could get and doing odd jobs, all the time getting weaker. He was never very strong. And the cough grew worse. Of late he has been unable to work except a day at a time, until at last when there was nothing in the house to eat we sold the furniture and lived on that and what Philip was able to give us. Then, last night Paul, worn out by hunger and sickness, is tempted and yields. He goes to the shop of Bernard—you remember Bernard the money lender who owes him something. He finds the shop empty and steals—twenty francs. (*She pauses.*) You see now how you have just come in time—how your arrival has seemed like an act of God. They are on the way to arrest Paul. Old Bernard has sworn a warrant. Paul is sick. If they take him from here now he will surely die. But they would arrest him in spite of that if you had not come. Now all is different. Bernard will let Paul off if we return the money. I could not do that. I had none. Now we can offer him the twenty francs, or forty, and he will withdraw the charge. It will be but forty francs. You have more than that.

JEAN (*stupidly*)

I?

MADAME DUVAL

'Yes, you, of course; who else? You have the money; you *must* have it. You have been at Toulon for ten years. The convicts are paid for their labor, are they not? Come, tell me. (*In sudden terror, as he does not answer*) Is it not so?

JEAN (*slowly*)

Yes.

MADAME DUVAL

There, of course! I knew it. Raoul Minot told me. His brother Felix served eight years and he had over fifty francs when he was released. You have

been there ten years. You must have earned much more than that.

JEAN

I did.

MADAME DUVAL

There! I knew it!

JEAN (*doggedly*)

But—I have no money.

MADAME DUVAL

No money? What do you mean?

JEAN

I was robbed—last night—on the road. Two men took all my money; they gave me this. (*Pointing to his bandaged head.*) They took all I had—the earnings of ten years.

MADAME DUVAL

No money—no money! (*She goes to the chair by the fire and sits staring into it, her hands in her lap as before. There is a silence in the room until more coughing is heard. MADAME DUVAL goes toward the inner room. JEAN raises his head for the first time.*)

JEAN

Can I see him—Paul? (*MADAME DUVAL shakes her head.*) Just a look?

MADAME DUVAL

For what? (*She goes out.*)

JEAN

Aye, for what? (*He resumes his former position, head down, staring at the table. PHILIP moves restlessly.*)

PHILIP

Life is hard there, in the galleys?

JEAN

Aye, life is hard—in the galleys.

PHILIP

Did they ill-treat you?

JEAN (*after a pause*)

You know what I was. Look at me now.

PHILIP

Yes, you have changed much.

JEAN (*as to himself*)

I was twenty-five when I went there. How old am I now? (*To PHILIP*) You

remember when I was arrested—how I was then—strong, young, happy. My trade was good. I was a jeweler. I hoped to bring my children up well. Paul was to be a student. The girls were to marry. Then they accused me. What was it? I forgot.

PHILIP

Of stealing.

JEAN

Aye, of stealing. What? I do not remember. I do not remember whether I was innocent or guilty. What does it matter now as long as they convicted me? I have forgotten much since I have been gone. But I remember the day they took me to prison. I remember it well. The yard where they put an iron collar on my neck and chained me to the rest. So they chained us—like dogs—and like dogs we lived. Ten years of it. The red cassock, the ball on the ankle, a plank for a bed, work under a burning sun, the guard with his cudgel, the beatings, the double chain for nothing, or worse yet, the cell. Heat, cold, toil, hardship and always the chain, by day by night, sick in bed, unable to move, still the chain—always the chain. (*He stops and puts his hand to his head. He removes the bandage, showing a long, jagged cut. He touches it, and then replaces the bandage.*)

I did not try to escape like many others. I took my punishment dumbly, so they said I was sly, cunning and much more dangerous than those who tried to break out. They accused me of making tools for the others to escape with, saws and such, because I was a good artisan and had been a jeweler. So when my time came to be released they gave me this. (*He fumbles in his breast and produces a large yellow paper which he opens and spreads on the table.*) You see, Philip, how it reads: "Jean Duval—born 1765—convicted 1790"—I know it by heart. And here, see how it ends: "He is a very dangerous man." So when you have served your time, when you have paid for your crime—or the crime you were convicted of—with the years of your life, why then your punishment only begins,

for they send you back to the world unfit for any work an honest man can do, old before your time, broken and useless, and with this paper that turns every honest man from you and closes every door against you. For a dangerous man there is only the life of a criminal left, and for the convict that is caught and convicted a second time there are the hulks. Do you know what they are, brother? They are worse than the galleys, far worse. No man who goes to the hulks ever returns. A dozen die there every day. And for the convict who is caught again it is the hulks. The hulks for life.

(His voice, which had been growing lower and lower, trails off into a whisper. Then there is silence. Outside the tramp of feet is heard and a crowd of figures pass the window. There is a knock at the street door. MADAME DUVAL enters from the other room and PHILIP goes to the door. JEAN rises and moves over to the shadow between the bench and the window, where he stands unnoticed during what follows. A BRIGADIER OF GENDARMES, followed by two gendarmes and M. BERNARD, a thin little old man, enter. The BRIGADIER strides quickly to the center of the room.)

BRIGADIER

Madame Duval? (*She bows.*) I have come to arrest one Paul Duval, charged by M. Bernard here with having entered and robbed his shop in the Rue de St. Antoine last night. I have here a warrant. (*He draws a large, official paper from his pocket and is about to read.*)

MADAME DUVAL

It is not true; my son did not take this man's money.

BERNARD

She lies! He did! I saw him.

BRIGADIER

Silence, M. Bernard. (*To MADAME DUVAL*) That, my good woman, will be established in court. Where is your son?

MADAME DUVAL (*eagerly*)

He is not guilty, M. Brigadier, I swear that he is not! Last night, he

says? It could not be. My son? He was here all last night. He was not out of the house. How could he, sick as he was?

BERNARD

Ah—

BRIGADIER (*cutting him short*)

That will be taken up at the proper time and place. I have a warrant for Paul Duval's arrest, and it is my duty—

MADAME DUVAL

But M. Brigadier, he is very sick. (*The coughing is heard again.*) Listen! You hear him?

BERNARD (*impatiently*)

It is all a trick; he has been coughing like that for years. He was well enough to rob my shop yesterday; he is well enough now to go to jail.

BRIGADIER (*loudly*)

M. Bernard, will you kindly be quiet? Allow me to suggest that I am in charge of this affair. (*To MADAME DUVAL*): Now, madame, I am sorry, but I have orders to arrest one Paul Duval. If he is in the next room produce him, or—

MADAME DUVAL

But, monsieur, he is ill—he is dying. To arrest him, sick as he is, would kill him outright. He is innocent—I swear to you he is innocent. He stole no money.

BERNARD

She lies; I—

BRIGADIER

Silence! Madame, I must arrest your son. Either bring him out here or I will go in and get him.

MADAME DUVAL (*desperately*)

No, no, monsieur; you must not do that; you must not take him; I tell you he is dying. He has but a few days to live, perhaps but a few hours. You will not arrest him. I appeal to you as a gentleman, as a Frenchman!

BRIGADIER

Enough of this; I must do my duty. (*He moves toward the door of the inner room.*)

January, 1911—9

MADAME DUVAL (*wildly*)

As an officer, as a Frenchman, you will not do this. It is murder; you will kill my boy. (*She stands before the door, blocking his way, half appealing, half defying him. He raises an arm to thrust her aside, but stops irresolutely. JEAN seems about to interfere, then stands back.*)

BERNARD (*angrily*)

It is a trick, all a trick, I tell you. I demand that you—

BRIGADIER (*turning fiercely on BERNARD*)

Hold your tongue, or by heaven I'll place you under arrest. Here! (*To one of the gendarmes*) Guard this man, and if he interrupts me again clap your hand over his mouth.

BRIGADIER

Now, Madame Duval, for the last time, I ask you, will you allow me to enter that room peaceably or must I use violence?

MADAME DUVAL (*speaking rapidly*)

Listen, monsieur! That man (*Pointing to Bernard*) is an enemy of my son's. He hates him. He would do anything to hurt him. My son worked for him. He discharged him. Even now while accusing Paul of robbing him he owes the boy wages which he has refused to pay, five francs. He knows that Paul is ill, that the slightest shock would kill him. Therefore he has made this charge. He knows he cannot prove it, but if he can cause Paul's arrest his object will be accomplished. You will not allow him to do that. You will not take my son away without making this man show some proof. All he wants is to cheat us of the money. Look at him and see if it is not so. Ask him what proof he has—ask him! (*All look at BERNARD, who shrinks under MADAME DUVAL'S words.*)

BRIGADIER (*hesitatingly*)

This is, of course, very irregular, and the arrest will—er—must of course be made; but before dragging this man to jail in the condition he is in perhaps it would be better to hear what M.

Bernard has to say against him. (*He turns to BERNARD, who does not dare to speak.*) You may talk now. What have you to say about this?

BERNARD (*excitedly*)

All I have to say is that I saw this fellow, Paul Duval, with my own eyes, stealing my money, as plainly as I see you. And I have known him for years; he has worked for me. I can swear to it. What more proof do you want?

MADAME DUVAL

Last night it was dark; how could he tell?

(*The BRIGADIER looks at BERNARD inquiringly.*)

BERNARD

There was a moon. It shone in the window behind him, and—

BRIGADIER

Behind him?

BERNARD

Yes, on his back, while he bent over—

BRIGADIER

Then you did not see his face?

BERNARD

No, Brigadier, but—

BRIGADIER

Let me finish, my friend. You did not see the face of the man who robbed you, yet you demand the arrest of this Paul Duval, swearing that it is he?

BERNARD

Ah, but I know him; his hair—the moon shone on his hair. Red hair; there is only one head like it in all Paris. That is Paul Duval's. They call it the Duval hair. His father had red hair, too. You could not mistake it, and I saw it plainly.

BRIGADIER

Red hair? Bah, I know a dozen men with red hair between here and the Rue de la Paix. One of my men here has red hair. It might have been he, eh, Pierre? Or (*He glances about the room and sees JEAN for the first time*) this man here. (*Pointing to JEAN'S hair*) And who is this man? (*Looking at MADAME*

DUVAL and PHILIP

) A fine looking ruffian, too.

MADAME DUVAL (*in a low voice*)
He is my husband.

BERNARD

Another lie. Her husband is a convict in Toulon—where the son belongs!

BRIGADIER (*to MADAME DUVAL*)
How is this?

JEAN (*stepping forward*)

I am Jean Duval, this woman's husband. I have been a convict, as M. Bernard says, but I have just been released.

BRIGADIER

Ah, a convict from the galleys. This begins to look interesting. (*To BERNARD*) It seems you have more of a case here than you think, M. Bernard. (*To JEAN*) Your passport. (*JEAN produces it from his breast.*)

BRIGADIER (*reading*)

Ah, a thief; ten years, and a very dangerous man. What think you of this, M. Bernard? Here is a thief, a convict, and with red hair, such as you describe. Now are you so sure that it was the younger Duval who robbed you, and whom you saw in the moonlight?

BERNARD (*positively*)

I know it was he, the younger.

BRIGADIER

Wait. Here, fellow. (*To JEAN*) When did you arrive here, in town?

JEAN

But two hours ago.

(*The BRIGADIER glances at MADAME DUVAL and PHILIP inquiringly. They confirm JEAN'S statement with nods.*)

BRIGADIER (*reluctantly*)

Well, it is lucky for you that it is so, my fine fellow. (*He turns away. JEAN goes back to the corner.*)

BERNARD (*suddenly*)

Brigadier, there is one thing that I had forgotten. When I came into my shop last night and found the thief there, I struck at his head with my

stick. I missed my aim, but I laid open his left hand across the fingers. It was a deep cut—I saw it; and I found blood afterward. Now the left hand of the man who robbed me is cut like that, and if the left hand of Paul Duval is not cut or bandaged I will withdraw my charge and acknowledge I have been mistaken. All you will have to do is to examine the hand of the woman's son. That is easy, is it not?

BRIGADIER

Why did you not mention this before? Madame Duval, you cannot object to this. If your son is innocent, as you say, there can be no reason—*(As BERNARD finishes speaking, JEAN, unnoticed by the others, takes out a short clasp knife and slashes the back of his hand.)*

MADAME DUVAL

He is innocent. He has no cut. I swear it. Don't, I pray you, go in that room; he is sick, dangerously sick, and the shock would kill him. You must not. He is very sick. *(The coughing is heard again.)*

BRIGADIER

Nonsense! I hear him coughing. Stand aside; I will see him for myself.

MADAME DUVAL

No, no! *(She steps in front of the door. He catches her and tries to pull her aside. They struggle briefly. The cough is heard again.)*

JEAN *(stepping forward)*

Stop. *(All turn to look at him. The BRIGADIER releases MADAME DUVAL.) Listen. I lied to you just now when I told you I arrived here only this afternoon. I got here last night. I had some money when I left Toulon, but I spent it on the way. So I was penniless when I reached here. I saw the shop of M. Bernard here. I knew he had money in plenty, and so I—*

BRIGADIER *(raising his hand)*

Wait. Before you go any further, I must warn you that whatever you say here will be used as evidence against you in case you are arrested. You understand?

JEAN

Yes. *(The BRIGADIER makes a motion*

to the gendarmes, who move nearer to JEAN.)

JEAN

And you know what the penalty is for a crime committed by an ex-convict?

JEAN
Yes—the hulks.

BRIGADIER *(impressively)*

The hulks—for life. Very well; proceed.

(JEAN is about to continue when the attention of all is arrested by a noise without, the tramp of feet and clanking of chains. It has been audible for some time, but all have been so intent on what has been going on in the house that they have not noticed it. Now it grows louder and nearer until at last past the long window files a column of men dressed in dirty red uniforms and green caps. They are fastened to each other by chains attached to collars on their necks and by chains at their ankles, which clank on the frozen ground. They shamble past in a seemingly never ending line, some carrying their chains, some dragging them wearily along behind. But this time it is almost dark. No sound is heard save the clanking of chains and the shuffling of feet.)

PHILIP

What are they?

BRIGADIER

They are the life prisoners. They are on their way to the hulks.

JEAN *(staring through the window, almost voicelessly)*

The hulks. *(He remains by the window watching until all have passed.)*

BRIGADIER *(turning to JEAN impatiently)*

Well?

JEAN *(to himself)*
The hulks—for life.

BRIGADIER

Come, come; go on with what you have to tell.

(JEAN looks at him, shaking his head slowly. A look of regret comes into his eyes as if for the first time he realized the

terrible price of his sacrifice. He hesitates. Suddenly the sick boy in the next room breaks out in a fit of coughing louder and more terrible than any he has yet had. He seems to be racked and torn and can be heard struggling and gasping for breath. MADAME DUVAL hurries from the room. As the coughing continues JEAN's expression changes. The look of fear and terror disappears; the regret dies out of his eyes; he no longer hesitates.)

JEAN (*coming forward to the table*)
Yes, that is all. It was I who stole the money. It was I who broke into the shop of Bernard. I am the thief. I returned to Paris last night. I had no money. I was hungry—destitute. It was I he saw in the moonlight. (*He removes his cap, showing the red hair.*) My hand was cut; look. (*He holds out his hand. By this time it is bandaged with the cloth that had been around his head, but the blood has soaked through and it is dyed a dirty red.*) A bad cut. You struck well, M. Bernard.

BRIGADIER

It is enough. (*He motions to the men*

to seize JEAN.) M. Bernard, you will please to accompany us. That is all, I believe, Madame Duval?

PHILIP

She has gone to Paul.

BRIGADIER

Well, there is nothing further. (*He signs to the gendarmes, who move toward the door with JEAN between them. At this moment there is a cry from the inner room. All stop. PHILIP hesitates, then goes toward the door. It opens and MADAME DUVAL comes out. She is pale and clings to the door for support.*)

PHILIP

What—

MADAME DUVAL

Paul, Paul—he is dead!

(JEAN looks at her for a moment, then signifies that he is ready. The BRIGADIER signs to the gendarmes, and they file out with JEAN between them.)

CURTAIN



TED—Did he sober down and marry?
NED—No; he married and sobered down.]



THE woman who marries to better herself generally becomes worse than ever.



THE prettier a woman is, the less she believes love is blind.

TRAVEL BROADENS ONE SO

By SAM GAZZAM

"O H, do tell me about your visit to London!" said Mrs. Gushby as she balanced herself on the edge of the sofa and clasped her hands. "You know I have been just dying to know what you thought of it, because you always have such clever ideas about things, and always see them the way they aren't—although of course there isn't anything new to say about London, unless you went where no one else ever went—and you couldn't do that when everyone has been everywhere, could you? No, indeed! I suppose it is because the 'busses are so convenient, although I must say I never saw a sign in an American street car like: 'Passengers must remove their mackintoshes before entering', and the way women jump on and off while in motion beats everything! Frights! Perfect frights!

"That's just what I said, 'Frights'; and it is all because of the way they dress, for their faces are pretty, but you do expect to see a placard in the shop windows: 'This gown guaranteed the dowdiest in London. Only £2-10-6'; though what the price might be I never did know, so I just said to myself: 'I'll say, "Ten pence make one shilling; ten shillings make one pound," and no doubt it will come near enough. I think their currency ought to be reformed or something. The idea of having penny pieces that are really two cents, and as big as a quarter of a dollar! But of course they are copper. It is copper, copper, copper all over Europe, and I simply couldn't eat the Paris oysters, they were so coppery. Not that I ate any in London, but the only time I asked for an English mutton chop in England the waiter just stood and

stared. But of course all mutton chops are English mutton chops in England, although they do come from Canada—or Australia.

"Yes, indeed! Just stood and stared, but they are usually so polite! It's 'Kew! Kew!' all the time, and the shop girls, too. It is short for 'Thank you,' and you can't step on them that they don't 'Kew' about it. I didn't get out there, though . . . Where? Oh, the Kew Gardens. Excuse *me*, but I thought you were paying attention! They said they were lovely and all that, but the Beefeaters were such a disappointment to me. Not at all gaudy, as I had been led to believe, but you *do* get so cheated over there. I got some perfectly beautiful real lace at Malines that wasn't real at all, but of course that wasn't in London. But the asparagus was simply superb. In Malines, of course. I was speaking of Malines, wasn't I? Right across from the station; and all over Europe I kept saying to myself: 'Malines for lace and asparagus!' It was such a blessing to find *one* thing in Europe that had not been overestimated. The Frenchmen are not at all polite at heart. No, indeed! Mostly whiskers.

"And I think St. Paul's was the barest looking thing I ever saw inside. I suppose it grows on one, but I was *so* sick of tombs. You know how tombs are for a steady diet, and there was a much better selection at that other tomb place. Westminster Abbey? Yes, that's it. We drove there from the Tower, and although I did think the Paris cabmen were the raggedest in the world we were actually stung by them in London. Indeed, yes! He took us to the wrong door, and when we asked him, in the

TRAVEL BROADENS ONE SO

politest way, to drive us to the right door, he charged another whole fare and, after all, we could have gone in at the other door, and it was all tombs, anyway. Foreign travel is mostly tombs, don't you think? But of course it must be broadening, although it wasn't the season for going into the Paris sewers. But we went down into and up into everything else mentioned in the books.

"I do think, though, there ought to be more things to go up into in London. You can be going up all the time in Paris—towers and cathedrals and things, but I suppose the English don't approve of it. It is low. Not the society, of course, for aristocracy is aristocracy, and has an uplifting effect, but all we saw of it was signs on the shops, and the poor are certainly sodden. I never saw anything so hopeless in my life, except trying to find the 'bus that is going where you want to go. I just gave it up and went where I didn't want to go.

"Of course I saw all the galleries. Dozens of them! The pictures made quite an impression on me. Some of them I shall never forget until my dying day. There was that one—I simply can't remember what it was now, but you will recall it. It was in one of the galleries, and was painted by—by—I forget his name. But it was a very impressive picture. No, now I come to think of it, that wasn't in London; it was in Amsterdam. Or Paris. I remember it distinctly, because the guide could not speak a word of English, and if he had been an English guide he would have. Wouldn't he? . . . Oh, I'm so glad you agree with me on that point, at least.

"The man that rowed us up the Thames spoke English. He was a very thorough English gentleman, and came from Canada, and told us a great deal about himself while we were looking at Windsor Castle. He described his home town most thoroughly, but we forgot to have him tell us about the Castle, and I dare say it was just as well, for we had

become so accustomed to not understanding guides that it didn't matter. He would probably have talked tombs. They all do. His grandmother died when he was a mere child and he might have mentioned her tomb, but he didn't. It was a perfect day for me—not a tomb in it.

"Oh, did you ever know that monkeys don't have fleas? I never, never knew that in all my life, and I might never have known it if I hadn't gone abroad. Travel is certainly broadening. The keeper at the Zoo assured us so time and again. About no fleas. That was one thing we learned that was not in the guidebook, but I suppose it will be in the next edition. Well, I got over trying to see everything the guidebooks mention. I just decided to go along calmly, and if I came to the Embankment, look at it, and what I didn't come across I saw quite as well in the picture postcards, and much better colored. As far as I'm concerned, I think a person might as well stay at home and see Europe on postcards, for after all, there is no telling whether the crown jewels in the Tower are real or only imitation. But I don't suppose it would be as broadening. A person might look at a thousand postcards and not broaden a bit. You certainly can't tell whether monkeys have fleas or not by looking at a postcard, can you?

"Well, I'm awfully glad to hear what you thought of London. I think that is what broadens one most—coming home and comparing experiences. I don't suppose we notice in ourselves that we have broadened any, but other people do. It makes us so much pleasanter companions, don't you think? So many people have been surprised when I mentioned that monkeys don't have fleas. I suppose that is why Mr. Roosevelt went to Africa—he has so much more to talk about since he came back.

"Oh, must you go? Well, I have enjoyed listening to your experiences so much!"



A DUEL BY PROXY

By A. R. WEEKES

I HAVE been young and now am old—five and thirty last birthday—and

I cannot for my life understand how people can say that modern life is not romantic. A more peaceable, phlegmatic, humdrum Anglo-Saxon than myself you couldn't find, and yet I've had dozens of adventures—simply dozens; and I've never gone a step out of my way to look for them. Among them all, I don't think I ever had a quainter time than when I fought my solitary duel.

It was in a minor German state ten years ago. I'd been spending ten days in the capital, and was rather bored and very fit and very keen on dancing; and when I heard there was to be a big masked ball at the Palace to celebrate the betrothal of the Princess Ottolie I crushed down my native shyness and made up my mind to go. There was only one small difficulty: it was a confoundedly exclusive affair, and by some curious oversight—which may or may not have been due to the fact that I'd quarreled with the Chancellor's wife—they had omitted to ask me.

I asked Yarborough what he thought about it. Yarborough was attaché at the Embassy at that time, an awfully nice chap with a House of Commons manner. He said I should get myself locked up. I offered to bet on it, but he said he never did bet, on principle. I assured him I meant to get in, and he promised to come and see me hanged. Then he began to reason with me, more in sorrow than in anger. His position was semi-official, of course, and he had to live up to it, but, meek as I am, I wasn't going to sit down under a public affront, so I told him politely to go to

the dickens, and went home to think out my plan of campaign.

Vandycks being as common as daisies, I thought I'd go as a Vandyck cavalier, and hoped I should pass in the crowd if I cut the heels off my shoes. As for the primal difficulty of getting in, I left that to chance. So on the night in question I turned up at the Palace in black velvet and lace ruffles and a mask, armed to the teeth with a beautiful audacity—and minus a card of invitation.

The Palace had tucked up its shirt sleeves and put on frills. It was a blaze of light from end to end, and the band was ripping. I could hear it as I waited in the street screwing up my courage. Smart little French girls in Worth frocks, glacial German *haute noblesse*, distinguished military nobs invisible behind their mustaches, drawling Americans who wanted to price the carpet by the yard—I watched them getting out of their carriages and filing into the courtyard, while I, with my unexceptionable quarterings and blameless character, stood in the mud!

It was a big affair. I said just now that every window was alight. But I was wrong. As I watched the Palace it struck me that there was a window at the left of the door to which there was no corresponding window on the right. Now the Palace was run up a few years ago by a symmetrically minded lunatic obsessed with the memory of his cast-off dolls' house, and everything matches in pairs. It struck me that it might be worth while to look into the matter, so I dismissed my car and went off to investigate.

Access to the Palace gardens was not

hard to obtain for one who was neither fat nor fifty, and before long I was on the terrace, as yet deserted. And there was a window, sure enough, black as pitch, a long French window with a curtain across it. The oddness of the affair stirred my blood. For the first and last time in my life I did an imprudent thing; I just gave the window a push, and—it opened!

I walked in. The next minute I felt a woman's arms round my neck, a woman's head on my shoulder, and a voice in my ear murmuring: "At last, Eugen, at last!"

My baptismal name is Charles. I stepped back as composedly as I could. "Forgive me," I said. "I am not your brother, madame."

"Who are you?" said a voice which made me start. I hadn't known it before, but I knew it now, and it struck me that I was in for a row.

"An unfortunate Englishman with a taste for dancing," I replied as pathetically as I could.

"What are you doing here?"

"Trying to get in by the window because I wasn't invited to come by the door."

"You have mistaken your route. I should advise you to retire, and to keep silent about your escapade, if you value your liberty."

That struck me as ungenerous. I made her a very low bow and said gravely:

"Your Highness's wish is a command."

Through the dimness I saw her grow white, and I was sorry I'd said it. She was a plucky girl, was Princess Ottolie.

"How did you know me?" she asked coolly.

"By your voice, Princess," I answered.

She eyed me doubtfully. "My brother's name is not Eugen," she said.

"Is it not?" said I. "Forgive my error. I do not live in the city; I'm only here for a night."

"You go away tomorrow?"

"Or tonight, if you'd prefer it."

Quite suddenly she smiled, and I perceived that she was pretty. "Why should you go?" she said. "Follow me

and you shall get your dance after all, Monsieur Madcap Englishman—"

Just then the window opened again behind us, and there came in a tall Vandyck whom with no great difficulty I divined to have received from his godfathers the baptismal name of Eugen. It is a pretty name, and he was a pretty fellow enough—about my height, now that I wore no heels, and with a notably good pair of shoulders. At sight of him the Princess colored rosy red and looked distractingly pretty and confused; and at sight of me he started and half moved to retreat. I stepped forward.

"Her Highness will explain to you, sir," I said, "that I am not a traitor, and not intentionally a spy."

"Come here, Eugen," said the Princess imperatively. And there followed a brief whispering, after which Eugen turned round with a smile which lit up his honest blue eyes. I liked him from that moment.

"I did you an injustice, sir," he said in excellent English. "I am sure you will respect a secret—"

"There is someone coming down the corridor," said I.

"I hear nothing."

"But I've cats' ears. Come, man, d'you want to be caught?"

And I opened the window for him. Before I could count ten my handsome friend had whipped out of the window, and the Princess after him. And there stood I, a masqued Vandyck, taking art and part in one of the most impudent and outrageous elopements that ever filled the headlines of the London dailies. Of course, if I'd had any sense, I should have followed them; but the suddenness of the thing took me so completely by surprise that I could only stand and stare. And before I could say "Jack Robinson"—though indeed I was feeling more apt to say my prayers—the door opened from the corridor and in walked two gentlemen, the one masked and carrying an electric torch, the other—the other—

"What's the time—what's the time, Karl?" said the Other. He was a small man, plump and florid, with a turn-up nose, waxed mustaches and the air of a

rakish groom. I did not wonder at the Princess's taste. I drew back against the dark curtain, while Karl—he of the torch—drew out his watch and flashed the light on its dial.

"Past eleven o'clock, Your Highness," he said in a suave, polished voice.

"She's late—she's late!" said the Prince irritably.

"I feel sure, sir, you will find that your suspicions were quite—"

And then the light flashed on me. I don't know which was the more confounded, the languid Karl or the panting Princelet. The latter found his voice first.

"What—what—what," he crackled out like a rattle of rifle fire—"what are you doing here, sir? Tell me that, will you? What do you mean by this impertinence—this—"

By this time I had my wits about me again, and—the Princess being pretty and a plucky young lady—had realized that the only course open to me—however at variance with my habitual discretion—was to cover her retreat. I saw at once that I had been taken for Monsieur Eugen. My Vandyck dress and the likeness in height and figure, plus the fact that I was masked, lent color to the mistake produced by some unexplained circumstantial coincidence. I had only to imitate Eugen's voice to make a capital understudy, and luckily my German is cosmopolitan, and I believe I'm a pretty good mimic. It is also highly probable that the Prince's acquaintance with my double was less intimate than the Princess's. Anyhow, I faced him boldly.

"The Palace is free to all tonight, sir."

He left off babbling for a moment. I think he was staggered by my impudence.

"To all *invited* guests," struck in the precious Karl, with a sneer. I wheeled round on him.

"Suffer me to settle my own affair with the Prince, your master," said I. "If you have anything further to say, I shall be happy to hear you afterward."

"Then you admit," said the Prince, waving Karl aside and speaking with

more dignity than he had yet assumed—after all, blood does tell—"you admit that you came—"

"I admit nothing, sir," said I as he paused. He shrugged his shoulders.

"This is useless, Herr Graf. I know by private information that you have an appointment with Her Highness at eleven. Has that appointment taken place already?"

"I have no appointment with Her Serene Highness."

"You deny it?"

I bowed.

"Then what are you doing here?"

"I was brought hither," said I with a modest assurance, "by the hand of Chance, sire."

The Prince's little blue eyes flashed, but he controlled himself.

"As you please," he said coldly. "I have no wish to create a disturbance. You had better withdraw as you came."

I reckoned the thing up. If I went back to the ballroom he would be certain to go and look for the Princess; and the sooner she was sought the sooner she would be missed and the hue and cry raised. "Since you will have it, sire, that I have an appointment with the Princess, why, you can hardly expect me to withdraw. Suppose the Princess were under the same delusion as yourself?"

"You refuse to go?" he cried.

"I must."

"I'll have you turned out—yes, yes, I will! Karl, go and summon my guards—send a detachment—"

"Consider the fracas and the scandal, sire," said I. "I shouldn't go peaceably."

"Turn him out, Karl! Yes, yes, turn him out, I say!"

Karl looked at me; I looked at Karl; nothing happened.

"But you *must* go!" chattered the Prince. He was foaming at the mouth with fury. "I insist on your going—yes, sir, insist! Do you hear me, sir?"

"I do," I said. I couldn't well have helped hearing him unless I had been very deaf, but I didn't say so.

"Why don't you go then?" he asked, glaring at me.

"Because I don't want to."

"You're an insolent young puppy—a—an intriguing bully—a—an Austrian spy, Herr Graf!"

"One at a time," I suggested. "I couldn't be all three at once, you know."

"Leave the room!" said the Prince.

"I won't," said I.

And then he struck me. I didn't knock him down; I couldn't—he was half my size. I was annoyed, but I put it down to Eugen's account and kept my hands by my side. No one can hit a man twice when he doesn't offer to return the blow, and I think the Prince was sorry he'd lost his temper.

"For that," he said gravely, "I owe you an apology. I am willing to make it in any form you like."

"Oh, I don't want any apologies," I said hastily, missing his point. And Karl, emboldened probably by the way I had taken the Prince's action, must needs shove his oar in.

"Sire, I would myself have taken upon me a task which would have been a pleasure, but which is unworthy of Your Highness's attention, had I not felt sure that it would be useless to expect the Herr Graf to defend himself in the manner practised by gentlemen."

Well, Englishmen don't fight duels, and I suppose at this point I ought to have owned up and beaten a retreat. But the coldest-blooded of us have rash moments, and besides, I felt that if I did own up my position would be equivocal, undignified and even dangerous. On the other hand, so long as I held my tongue I had the Graf Eugen's reputation to keep up as well as my own. I drew myself up with as much as I could muster of military deportment, and brought my heels together.

"Your Highness misunderstands me. I shall be charmed to have the honor of confronting my Prince, or, if that is beyond my deserts, any substitute that may be provided."

The Prince pulled thoughtfully at his mustache for a moment before he spoke again.

"Though not of royal blood, yours is a

noble and an ancient family. I am willing to cross swords with you."

"Oho!" said I to myself. "Swords, is it? Poor Graf Eugen!"

For I had supposed that to myself, as the challenged party, the choice of weapons would fall; and I knew that the Prince had the name of one of the finest fencers in Europe.

Well, I'm willing to make excuses for the man who is done out of his bride by a trick. Love—I'm told; I never was in love in my life—is a disturbing element. Still, even a man in love plays the game; and I did not consider that the Prince was playing any game but his own. Further, I remembered that the Princess's lands were very broad, and that the tongue of scandal had not spared His Highness; and I came to the conclusion that, so far as the Prince was concerned, there wasn't much romance in the affair. For reasons of my own, however, I did not dispute the point; and indeed, if I had disputed it, I suspect that I should only have been accused of cowardice and set upon *sans façon*.

"Your Highness does me too much honor," said I with a low bow.

Karl didn't waste time. In a trice the gas was lit up and the room as bright as day. The Prince and I were put into place facing each other, and the yellow light sparkled on our swords. It is my firm conviction that the sword the Prince was wearing—they were both in uniform—was longer than mine, but Karl swore they were the same length, and it was too much of a bore to contradict him.

"*A la morte?*" said the Prince.

"Certainly, sir," said I politely.

"Give the word," said the Prince to Karl.

"One moment," I exclaimed, pierced by a sudden thought. "Monsieur there is armed?"

The Prince gave me a queer look. "Do you doubt my honor, Herr Graf?"

"Merely the discretion of your servant, sir."

"Ah! Well"—he paused—"will my word of honor satisfy you?"

It didn't; but I was young and

ingenuous and modest, and I said, "Yes."

Karl stepped back and took out his handkerchief, and I watched him with the queerest mixed feelings. Of course, the whole thing was inevitable—I could not possibly have got out of my scrape in any other way; yet, there's no denying, it's an awkward thing to fight a duel with a Crown Prince. It was by way of being "Heads I win, tails you lose," for if I killed him I stood a very fair chance of being hanged for it out of hand. However, I thought of the pretty Princess, and consoled myself with the reflection that a man can die but once.

All these meditations lasted till the suave Karl said "Go!" and dropped the handkerchief. After that they ceased abruptly.

"Jove, what a fencer that little beggar was! Deuce knows where he got his passes from. It was all I could do to defend myself, for he pressed me awfully hard; I ran away from him, and he chased me all about the room. I expected to be hit every minute, and indeed, I don't know why I wasn't, but I suppose Fortune favored me—she always had rather a penchant for your servant. Well, after a while I noticed that he began to look a bit surprised and then a bit disappointed, and pretty soon I found him cooling down. The more he cooled, the more I cooled, for I wasn't going to let him flurry me; and, my faith, wasn't I gay? His was very queer sword play, and most puzzling till you got used to it, but once you saw how he worked the trade it wasn't half so formidable—even for an English *lourdard* like myself!"

By and by I ventured to turn the tables—to take the offensive. And then I found out his vulnerable point! All his strength was in the first brunt of the attack; the pace was so hot that he couldn't keep it up very long. He wasn't, you see, in the very pink of training—a short course of *kirschwasser* for breakfast would impair the digestion of an ostrich, and I never heard that the Prince was a blue ribboner—and wind began to tell. It was his turn to give

ground, which he did with a very bad grace, panting and puffing like a liner in a fog; and I can tell you I made His Highness waltz!

I kept him on the hop for about five minutes, and he looked more pained and annoyed than any princeling I ever saw before. I could have run him through at any moment, and he knew it. Meanwhile the little white rat Karl was glowering at me from a corner of the room. So I was just making up my mind to send the Prince's sword flying and talk to him like a father and let him go, when suddenly he began working round the room as quietly as he could. I didn't catch on, for he had passed his word and I supposed he meant to abide by it, and he maneuvered about till by and by he got me with my back to the rat. Then he looked at him. I couldn't see the rat, but I saw the look, and I legged it. My Prince's eyes were too like a snake's for me.

I got my back to the wall, and Karl ran his sword through the air by mistake for my shoulders, and nearly shoved it into the Prince, the clumsy swindling brutes! I wish he had. When they grasped the position they both flew on me. Karl had a sort of mongrel, two-to-one courage, and he could use his sword fairly well; as for the Prince, he put on his old tactics. I couldn't give an inch, having the wall behind me. My mask was dripping wet, and I thought every minute it would be in my eyes. Give you my word, I didn't care a hang! I told them to go to the devil, *tous deux*; oh, but I was mad! The Prince made a thrust; I parried that with my sword, and caught a slash from Karl on my left arm that laid it open from elbow to wrist. Quick as lightning came the Prince's sword again, and Karl ran right in on me. The air was alive with sparkles, and the blades leaped and crossed like blue flame.

Feint, thrust, parry, and the rat's voice crying, "I've got him!" and a deep "Ha!" from the Prince. And—the door opened, and Yarborough sprang into the room.

There were others behind him. He

A DUEL BY PROXY

had nothing but a cane in his hand, but he struck up the swords somehow, and put himself between Karl and me. There was an awful pause, one of those pauses that no one ever can fill up. The Prince came to the rescue.

"Really, Mr. Yarborough," he said smoothly, "I see no justification for this singular intrusion. The Herr Graf and myself were having a friendly rally—merely a friendly rally—that is all."

"The Herr *what?*" said Yarborough. I never saw him so clean bowled over before. He couldn't find a single word of more than two syllables.

"The Herr Graf," said the Prince with dignity. "The reason of this intrusion, gentlemen?"

"Auburn, what—what are you doing?" said Yarborough.

"Auburn!" echoed the Prince.

"Auburn?" said the white rat with a sort of snarl. I am rather well known on the Continent, and the white rat had met me before; and we hadn't got on.

"What's the row about?" said English voices in the doorway.

"*Gott in Himmel, wie ist's mit ihnen?*" said German voices.

So I thought it was time to bring the farce to a close. I stepped forward and pulled off my mask.

"Charles Auburn, at Your Highness's service," said I, with a profound salutation à l'anglaise.

"What—what masquerade is this? *Was zum Teufel*—what is this? Where is Graf Eugen, sir? Answer me that, if you please—where is Graf Eugen?"

"It is my duty to inform Your Highness," said Yarborough solemnly, "that the Princess Ottolie is with her husband."

"With her husband? Who *zum Teufel* is her husband?"

"The Graf Eugen, Highness."

"*Her husband!*"

"To whom I understand that she was married at six o'clock this morning."

I thought my Prince would have had a fit. But he didn't; he took it out on me. The room was crowded by this time, but he didn't care twopence half-penny. Give you my word, he made

use of many expressions which I had never even *heard* before! When he had cursed me up to my remote ancestors and down to my second cousins once removed I thought I'd stop it, there being ladies in the room. So I pulled him up.

"Not so fast," I said. "I never told you I was the Graf Eugen."

He continued to babble evilly.

"I never heard of the Graf Eugen before," I cried. "You said I was the Graf Eugen; I didn't. I wasn't yearning to be the Graf Eugen. I'll be shot if I see what I stood to get by it except six inches of steel!" I was getting rather sick of it, you know.

"You will be shot," said my Prince amiably, "or hanged as a traitor—if you aren't broken on the wheel."

"May I speak, sir?" intervened Yarborough calmly. "Her Highness entrusted me with a packet to be delivered into Your Highness's hands."

He tendered it with exquisite deference. The Prince read it through. It was very short, and it had the most miraculous effect I ever saw.

"True, true," said the Prince in an odd, jerky voice. "Very true, very true. I hadn't thought of that." He read the note through again, folded it up and put it carefully away in his pocket. "Extremely sensible; very sensible, just so," he said, and he eyed me with an exceedingly odd expression. "Well, well, I'm glad it's no worse. After all, you did your best to serve the Princess—I should say the late Princess—I should say the Gräfin Eugen. Well, well, Mr. Auburn! I hope I shall some day have the pleasure of your society at my palace of—I mean, I should say, under happier auspices—yes, yes, happier auspices."

I should have liked to retort that, if by "happier auspices" he meant that he wanted a second chance of getting me run through the back, I should prefer to decline that honor. Instead, I turned to Yarborough and said:

"Did the Princess get away all right?"

"She did," said Yarborough, and he put his arm round me.

"What a lot of lights there are in the room!" said I, leaning against him.
"And what a number of people!"

"All right, my dear fellow," said Yarborough. "And now, don't you think you had better let me tie up your arm?"

Late that night—I mean early the next morning—I was lying back in a lounge chair in Yarborough's smoking room. I was smoking an excellent cigar; my arm was bandaged, and I was in charity with all men—bar Karl.

"I say, Yarborough—" I said.

"Well?" said Yarborough, looking down on me. He was standing with his back to the fire like an incarnate frock coat in evening dress.

"I've made a confounded fool of myself," said I pensively.

The frock coat arched its eyebrows. "I had understood that that was your usual method of procedure," he replied blandly. He meant it, too.

"Lucky for me you came in when you did."

"And for the world at large."

"Oh, you insensate brute!" said I. "I'm thanking you for saving my life."

"Oh!" said Yarborough. "I am extremely sorry to have misconceived your meaning."

"I say," I said, "I suppose it was the Princess sent you to me?"

"Precisely. She arrived in a motor car, accompanied by her husband. She directed me to the room, where she assured me that I should find a compatriot in distress. When I heard your name, my dear Auburn, I came at once; I was sure the Princess was not mistaken."

"Well, you needn't jeer," said I. "The Princess is uncommonly pretty."

"True; and I suppose you have no friends who would regret your loss."

"Only my tailor," I said. "I say, Yarborough, d'you know what was in that note?"

"Why, yes," said Yarborough. "She gave it to me to read."

"What was it?"

"You will consider the secret inviolable?"

"Eternally."

Yarborough scribbled—I mean he wrote; he never scribbled in his life—three lines on a sheet of paper; and I read the farewell message of the Princess Ottolie to her betrothed:

As I am to be married to a subject, my title and lands will devolve upon my younger sister. She likes court life; I do not. She has no temper; I have. Farewell.



THE man who does not know what fear is is not brave—he is ignorant.



A POOR relation—a rich man who keeps his money to himself.



IF wisdom were becoming to a woman, she would know everything.

LES BÉBÉS RIRONT DEMAIN

Par PIERRE LORRAINE

M. DE GALBE n'était point sorti ce soir-là malgré que l'invitation traditionnelle à dîner ne lui eut point fait défaut. Il avait les bleus; il ne se sentait pas en forme; et mille fois mieux valait ne se point montrer du tout que de se laisser voir à son désavantage. Une réputation d'esprit est pour un homme ce qu'est pour une femme une réputation de beauté: il faut la soigner.

Il avait donc diné seul, en tête à tête avec lui-même, et n'avait guère fait honneur à l'excellent menu, que son cuisinier-valet avait improvisé pour cette circonstance extraordinaire dans sa vie de mondain: Monsieur dine chez lui.

C'était le 24 décembre, veille de Noël; en allant choisir, dans un magasin à la mode, un chargement de jouets pour les enfants des innombrables maisons où il fréquentait, il avait aperçu une jeune femme de mise plus que simple, presque minable, accompagnée de deux bébés charmants. Elle s'était probablement fourvoyée dans ce paradis de l'enfance opulente, et n'osait en sortir sans rien avoir acheté. Gênée par les regards dédaigneux des vendeuses, et aussi par la crainte de peiner ses deux chérubins bénis d'admiration, elle marchandait timidement les choses les plus modestes, mais c'était encore trop cher, car à chaque réponse elle reposait l'objet d'un air las.

A la fin, avec une courtoisie ironique, on l'invita à s'adresser ailleurs, puisque rien n'était dans ses prix.

— Je crois que c'est ce que j'ai de mieux à faire, répondit-elle en rougissant: venez mes petits.

— Mais maman, le beau cheval! Maman, la belle poupée!

— Ce n'est pas pour nous, mes chéris, ce sont des jouets de riches, murmura-t-elle en sortant, pas si bas cependant que M. de Galbe ne l'entendit.

Machinalement, il la suivit, non point comme il avait tant suivi de fines silhouettes, dans sa vie de parisien désoeuvré, pour voir si un joli visage était appareillé à une tournure élégante. Une idée avait traversé son esprit et l'absorbait. Pour la première fois, il saisissait qu'il y avait d'autres pauvres que les loqueteux qui demandent deux sous dans la rue. Cette jeune femme, ces enfants aux traits aristocratiques étaient des gens de race fine tout comme lui; il le sentait. Cependant, ils étaient pauvres. Leurs vêtements râpés, les hésitations de la mère, le prouvaient assez. Et ce mondain léger, en était stupéfait. Ayant toujours vécu dans un milieu riche, riche lui-même, il lui semblait obligatoire que certaines gens eussent de la fortune. C'était dans l'ordre naturel des choses, et cependant il n'en était pas ainsi.

Si lui, de Galbe, venait à se trouver sans le sou? Bah! il avait 80,000 livres de rente, la vieille tante de Graveron en avait autant, et ça, c'était de l'argent sûr: pas d'autre héritier que lui! Mais enfin, supposons l'impossible? Eh bien! n'avait-il pas un beau nom, une grande situation mondaine et son aimable personne à offrir aux héritières millionnaires et mal apparentées? Cette perspective lui souriait peu. Jusqu'à ce jour, les de Galbe ne s'étaient point mésalliez et il est toujours désobligeant de commencer.

Alors? Plus de fêtes! plus de clubs! plus de chevaux! Il prendrait des fiacres; si les fiacres étaient encore trop

hauts pour ses moyens? Les omnibus? Trop cher aussi les omnibus! Il irait à pied. Et s'il n'avait même pas de quoi s'offrir une solide paire de souliers à triple semelle?

Il commençait à comprendre ce que pouvait être la pauvreté, et cela lui serrait le cœur.

Tout en rêvant à ces tristesses, il suivait toujours ceux qui les lui avait suggérées. Ils s'étaient engagés dans ces petites rues qui séparent le boulevard de la Madeleine du boulevard Haussmann, et où, en plein Paris on trouve des loyers à la portée des plus modestes bourses.

La jeune femme pénétra dans une maison fort laide.

Quand de Galbe arriva devant la porte, elle avait disparu. Sans bien réfléchir à ce que cette démarche pouvait avoir d'inconsidéré il entra dans la loge et interrogea le concierge.

Le cerbère officiel le reçut assez mal; mais un louis déposé à propos sur la table changea ses dispositions et il devint loquace. De Galbe ne s'était point trompé. La jeune femme était Mme Tholosan, fille du banquier Benque dont le crac énorme et le suicide avaient ému Paris quelques dix-huit mois auparavant. Après la ruine, M. Tholosan avait abandonné tout ce qu'il possédait aux créanciers de son beau-père. Il était parti pour l'Australie, et sa jeune femme s'était refugiée dans un logis misérable avec ses deux enfants.

"Ça vivait, on ne savait de quoi? Ça payait à peine son terme!" etc. De Galbe le coupa court, il était édifié.

Ne fréquentant pas le monde de la finance, la jeune femme lui était inconnue; mais il avait rencontré assez souvent le père au club où il jouait très gros jeu.

Rêveur, il reprit le chemin de son "home," et tout en marchant il se peignait les sentiments de cette jeune femme par cette veille de Noël, seule, abandonnée de tous, n'ayant même pas de quoi donner un peu de joie aux petits.

Elle, dont les moindres souhaits avaient toujours été comblés aussitôt que formulés!

Quelle tristesse! Une envie le prenait de retourner au magasin d'où il l'avait vue sortir et de faire envoyer une charrette de joujoux à ces petits abandonnés. Des jouets de luxe à des enfants qui avaient à peine le nécessaire!

Un chèque? Pas praticable, une telle femme souffrirait de l'aumône.

C'est pourquoi le vicomte de Galbe dina seul ce soir de Noël, préoccupé du désir d'une bonne action et ne sachant comment s'y prendre. Sorti de table, desoeuvré, il fourrageait dans les tiroirs de son bureau. Par hasard, un carnet de billets à ordre vieux de plusieurs mois, lui tomba sous la main. Machinalement, il le feuilleta. Des invitations, des rendez-vous, des cadeaux à envoyer, des visites à rendre, des pertes de jeux, des achats de chevaux, toute cette comédie d'une vie élégante qui paraît si comble de loin . . . et si vide quand on y réfléchit. Un nom le frappa: gagné à Benque, 5,800 francs.

Une idée surgit brusquement dans son esprit. Cet argent il aurait pu le perdre, il perdait souvent plus que cela. Pourquoi ne l'aurait-il pas perdu?

Cependant 6,000 francs, c'était une somme! Mais il avait eu ces derniers temps une veine insolente.

Il alla à son secrétaire et vérifia sa réserve de jeu. Il compta soigneusement 5,800 francs en billets, les mit sous enveloppe, et sonna.

— Faites atteler, dit-il au valet qui se présenta.

Sa tristesse avait disparu, il avait trouvé . . .

* * * * *

Seule, assise dans la pauvre pièce qui lui servait à la fois de salle à manger et de cuisine, Mme Tholosan se sentait encore plus profondément désolée que de coutume. Les chérubins, tout en s'endormant, lui avaient fait part de leurs rêves! Le petit Jésus allait leur apporter ceci et cela, le beau cheval et la belle poupee, et, religieusement, ils avaient suspendu leurs bas au pied du lit. Quelle joie c'eût été autrefois, et maintenant! Ses ressources étaient épuisées; aucune nouvelle du bien-aimé absent parti au loin pour bâtir un

nouveau nid à sa couvée. Que faire? L'avenir lui paraissait si noir, si absolument sans issue, que, cachant sa tête dans les mains, elle sanglota éperdument.

La cloche de la porte sonna. Étonnée, elle ne songea pas à aller répondre. Qui pouvait se présenter chez elle à cette heure indue?

La sonnette tinta de nouveau; elle ouvrit, et à sa profonde surprise, se trouva en face d'un homme extrêmement élégant qui, chapeau bas, avec la même exquise politesse qu'il eut mis à saluer une duchesse dans un salon princier, s'excusa de se présenter si tard.

Sans s'arrêter aux interrogations de la jeune femme, il pénétra dans la cuisine et déposa sur la table deux énormes paquets.

—Madame, dit-il, je suis le vicomte de Galbe. Veuillez me pardonner si je prends votre logis d'assaut à pareille heure, mais c'est aujourd'hui seulement que j'ai connu votre adresse, et je n'ai pu attendre jusqu'à demain pour venir régler une affaire qui me tenait fort au cœur.

J'avais contracté envers M. votre père une dette de jeu, qui, pour des rai-

sons trop longues à expliquer, n'a pas encore été réglée. Je suis donc votre débiteur.

Et sortant un carnet de sa poche, il montra à la jeune femme, un billet à ordre qui indiquait la date, la somme, etc., en un mot, une foule d'indications extraordinairement précises.

—Vous voyez, madame, continua-t-il très vite, pour ne pas donner à la jeune femme muette et surprise le temps de se remettre, tout cela est bien en bonne règle, et j'ai des excuses à vous faire d'avoir tant tardé.

—Maintenant, ajouta-t-il gaiment, les dettes de jeu ne portent pas intérêt, mais je suis si en retard que pour une fois, vous tolerez que je passe outre la coutume, et désignant les gros paquets posés sur la table: Voilà le gros cheval et la poupee que vous voudrez bien offrir de ma part à vos bébés.

Et saluant profondément, il sortit.

Tout en descendant à tâtons le piètre escalier:

—J'ai menti comme un gueux, se disait-t-il à lui-même . . . et bien mal . . . manque d'habitude! mais vrai, je ne m'en repens pas: les bébés riront demain!



LE JET D'EAU

Par J. GALZY

LE jardin s'agrandit dans le silence bleu,
Le ciel a la couleur des turquoises qui meurent,
Et, seule voix de l'air tiède et silencieux,
Dans les vieux bassins verts et mornes les eaux pleurent.

Une planète d'or veille sur la colline
Et là-bas, au détour d'une allée, un jet d'eau
Ressemble à quelque saule irréel qui s'incline
Et laisse jusqu'au sol tomber ses feuilles d'eau.

HAVOC

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Arthur Dorward, a young American journalist in Vienna, secures for his paper a great "beat"—a full account of a private conference between the Emperor and the Czar, and attempts to get out of the country with his papers. On the train with him is David Bellamy, an English diplomatic agent, and several Austrian secret service men. Dorward is attacked by the Austrians, thrown from the train and his papers taken from him. Bellamy then plots to secure the papers and enlists the help of Louise Idiale, a Servian opera singer, who proceeds to encourage the attentions of Von Behrling, in charge of the Austrian party, and induces him to agree to sell the papers to the English government. He turns over to Bellamy a packet, found to contain only blank paper, for which the English have paid twenty thousand pounds, and Bellamy is thereby discredited. Von Behrling is found murdered that same evening. Stephen Laverick, a broker, finds the body and takes with him the wallet found on the dead man. He uses the money to tide over a business crisis, and helps his late partner Arthur Morrison to get out of the country. He buys off a man who has evidence tending to incriminate Morrison, and takes the latter's half-sister to dinner at a restaurant, where she points out a woman who is regarding him intently.

This novel began in the September SMART SET. Back copies of the magazine may be had from any newsdealer or the publishers.

XXI

L AVERICK looked across the room. Louise and Bellamy were sitting at the opposite table. The former was strikingly handsome and very wonderfully dressed. Her closely clinging gown, cut slightly open in front, displayed her wonderful figure. She wore long pearl earrings and a hat with white feathers which drooped over her fair hair. Laverick recognized her at once.

"It is Mademoiselle Idiale," he said, "the most wonderful soprano in the world."

"Why does she look so at you?" Zoe asked.

Laverick shook his head. "I do not know her," he said. "I know who she is, of course—everyone does. She is a Servian, and they say that she is devoted to her country. She left Vienna at a moment's notice, only a few days ago, and they say that it was because she had sworn never to sing again be-

fore the enemies of her country. She had been engaged a long time to appear at Covent Garden, but no one believed that she would really come. She breaks her engagements just when she chooses. In fact, she is a very marvelous person altogether."

"I never saw such pearls in my life," Zoe whispered. "And how lovely she is! I do not understand, though, why she is so interested in you."

"She mistakes me for someone, perhaps."

It certainly seemed probable. Even at that moment she touched her escort upon the arm, and he distinctly looked across at Laverick. It was obvious that the latter was the subject of her conversation.

"I know the man," Laverick said. "He was at Harrow with me, and I have played cricket with him since. But I have certainly never met Mademoiselle Idiale. One does not forget that sort of person."

"Her figure is perfect," Zoe mur-

mured wistfully. "Do you like tall women, Mr. Laverick?"

"I adore them," he answered, smiling—"but I prefer small ones."

"We are very foolish people, you and I," she laughed. "We came together so strangely and yet we talk such frivolous nonsense."

"You are making me young again," he declared.

"Oh, you are quite young enough!" she assured him. "To tell you the truth, I am jealous. Mademoiselle Idiale looks at you all the time. Look at her now. Is she not beautiful?"

There was no doubt about her beauty, but those who were criticising her—and she was by far the most interesting person in the room—thought her a little sad. Though Bellamy was doing his utmost to be entertaining, her eyes seemed to travel every now and then over his head and out of the room. Wherever her thoughts were, one could be very sure that they were not fixed upon the subject under discussion.

"She is like that when she sings," Laverick remarked. "She has none of the vivacity of the French women. Yet there was never anything so graceful in the world as the way she moves about the stage."

"If I were a man," Zoe sighed, "that is the sort of woman I could die for."

"If you were a man," he replied, "you would probably find someone whom you preferred to live for. Do you know, you are rather a morbid sort of person, Miss Zoe!"

"Ah, I like that!" she declared. "I will not be called Miss Leneveu any more by you. You must call me Miss Zoe, please—Zoe, if you like."

"Zoe, by all means. Under the circumstances, I think it is only fitting." His eyes wandered across the room again.

"Ah!" she cried softly. "You, too, are coming under the spell, then. I was reading about her only the other day. They say that so many men fall in love with her—so many men to whom she gives no encouragement at all."

Laverick looked into his companion's

face. "Come," he said; "my heart is not so easily won. I can assure you that I never aspire to so mighty a personage as a Covent Garden star. Don't you know that she gets a salary of five hundred pounds a week, and wears ropes of pearls which would represent ten times my entire income? Heaven alone knows what her gowns cost!"

"After all, though," murmured Zoe, "she is a woman. See, your friend is coming to speak to you."

Bellamy was indeed crossing the room. He nodded to Laverick and bowed to his companion. "Forgive my intruding, Laverick," he said. "You do remember me, I hope? Bellamy, you know."

"I remember you quite well. We used to play together at Lord's, even after we left school."

Bellamy smiled. "That is so," he answered. "I see by the papers sometimes that you have kept up your cricket. Mine, alas, has had to go. I have been too much of a rolling stone lately. Do you know, I have come to ask you a favor."

"Go ahead," Laverick interposed.

"Mademoiselle Idiale has a fancy to meet you," Bellamy explained. "You know, or I dare say you have heard, what a creature of whims she is. If you won't come across and be introduced like a good fellow, she probably won't speak a word all through supper time, go off in a huff, and my evening will be spoiled."

Laverick laughed heartily. A little smile played at the corner of Zoe's lips—nevertheless, she was looking slightly anxious.

"Under those circumstances," said Laverick, "perhaps I had better go. You will understand," he added, with a glance at Zoe, "that I cannot stay for more than a second."

"Naturally," Bellamy answered. "If mademoiselle really has anything to say to you, I will, if I am permitted, return for a moment."

Laverick introduced him to Zoe.

"I am sure I have seen you at the Universal," he declared. "You're in the front row, aren't you? I have seen

you in that clever little step dance and song in the second act."

She nodded, evidently pleased. "Does it seem clever to you?" she asked wistfully. "You see, we are all so tired of it."

"I think it is ripping!" Bellamy declared. "I shall have the pleasure again directly," he added with a bow.

The two men crossed the room. "What the dickens does Mademoiselle Idiale want with me?" Laverick demanded. "Does she know that I am a poor stockbroker, struggling against hard times?"

Bellamy shrugged his shoulders. "She isn't the sort to care who or what you are," he answered. "And as for the rest, I suppose she could buy any of us up if she wanted to. Her interest in you is rather a curious one. No time to explain it now. She'll tell you."

Louise smiled as he paused before her. She gave him the tips of her fingers as Bellamy pronounced his name.

"It is so kind of you," she said, "to come and speak to me. And, indeed, you will laugh when I tell you why I thought that I would like to say one word with you."

Laverick bowed. "I am thankful, mademoiselle," he replied, "for anything which procures me such a pleasure."

She smiled. "Ah, you, too, are gallant!" she said. "But, indeed, I fear you will not be flattered when I tell you why I was so interested. I read all your newspapers. I read of that terrible murder in Crooked Friars Alley only a few days ago—is not that how you call the place?"

Laverick was suddenly grave. What was this that was coming?

"One of the reports," she continued, "says that the man was a foreigner. The maker's name upon his clothes was Austrian. I, too, come from that part of Europe—if not from Austria, from a country very near—and I am always interested in my countrypeople. A few moments ago I asked my friend Mr. Bellamy: 'Where is this Crooked Friars Alley?' Just then he bowed to you, and he answered me: 'It is in the City. It is within a yard or two of the offices of the

gentleman to whom I just have said good evening.' So I looked across at you and I thought that it was strange."

Laverick scarcely knew what to say. "It was a terrible affair," he admitted, "and, as Mr. Bellamy has told you, it occurred within a few steps of my office. So far, too, the police seem completely at a loss."

"Ah!" she went on, shaking her head. "Your police, I am afraid they are not very clever. It is too bad, but I am afraid that it is so. Tell me, Mr. Laverick, is this, then, a very lonely spot where your offices are?"

"Not at all," Laverick replied. "On the contrary, in the daytime it might be called the heart of the city—of the money making part of the city, at any rate. Only this thing, you see, seems to have taken place very late at night."

"When all the offices were closed," she remarked.

"Most of them," Laverick answered. "Mine, as it happened, was open late that night. I passed the spot within half an hour or so of the time when the murder must have been committed."

"But that is terrible!" she declared, shaking her head. "Tell me, Mr. Laverick, if I drive to your office some morning, you will show me this place—yes?"

"If you are in earnest, mademoiselle, I will certainly do so, but there is nothing there. It is just a passage."

"Give me your address," she insisted, "and I think that I will come. You are a stockbroker, Mr. Bellamy tells me. Well, sometimes I have a good deal of money to invest. I come to you and you will give me your advice. So! You have a card?"

Laverick found one and scribbled his city address upon it. She thanked him and once more held out the tips of her fingers. "So I shall see you again some day, Mr. Laverick."

He bowed and recrossed the room. Bellamy was standing talking to Zoe. "Well," he asked, as Laverick returned, "are you, too, going to throw yourself beneath the car?"

Laverick shook his head. "I do not

think so," he answered. "Our acquaintance promises to be a business one. Mademoiselle spoke of investing some money through me."

Bellamy laughed. "Then you have kept your heart," he remarked. "Ah, well, you have every reason!"

He bowed to Zoe, nodded to Laverick and returned to his place. Laverick looked after him a little compassionately. "Poor fellow," he said.

"Who is he?"

"He has some sort of a Government appointment," Laverick answered. "They say he is hopelessly in love with Mademoiselle Idiale."

"Why not?" Zoe exclaimed. "He is nice. She must care for someone. Why do you pity him?"

"They say, too, that she has no more heart than a stone," Laverick continued, "and that never a man has had even a kind word from her. She is very patriotic, and all the thoughts and love she has to spare from herself are given to her country."

Zoe shuddered. "Ah," she murmured, "I do not like to think of heartless women. Perhaps she is not so cruel, after all. To me she seems only very, very sad. Tell me, Mr. Laverick, why did she send for you?"

"I imagine," answered he, "that it was a whim. It must have been a whim."

XXII

LAVERICK the following morning found many things to think about. He was accustomed to lunch always at the same restaurant, with the same little company of friends. Just as he was leaving, an outside broker whom he knew slightly came to him.

"Tell me, Laverick," he asked, "what's become of your partner?"

"He has gone abroad for a few weeks. As a matter of fact, we shall be announcing a change in the firm shortly."

"Queer thing," the broker remarked. "I was in Liverpool yesterday, and I could have sworn that I saw him hanging around the docks. I should never have doubted it, but Morrison was

always so careful about his appearance, and this fellow was such a seedy-looking individual. I called out to him and he vanished like a streak."

"It could scarcely have been Morrison," Laverick said. "He sailed several days ago for New York."

"That settles it," the man declared. "All the same, it was the most extraordinary likeness I ever saw."

Laverick, on his way back, went into a cable office and wrote out a marconigram to the *Lusitania*:

Have you passenger Arthur Morrison on board? Reply.

Then he went back to his office. "Anyone to see me?" he inquired.

"Mr. Shepherd is waiting," his clerk told him. "Queer-looking fellow who paid you two hundred and fifty pounds in cash for some railway stock."

Laverick nodded. "I'll see him," he said. "Anything else?"

"A lady rang up—name sounded like a French one, but none of us could catch it—to say that she was coming down to see you."

"If it is Mademoiselle Idiale," Laverick directed, "I must see her directly she arrives. How are you, Shepherd?" he added, nodding to the waiter as he passed to his room. "Come in. You've got your certificates all right?"

Shepherd had the air of a man with whom prosperity had not wholly agreed. He was paler and pastier-looking than ever, and his eyes seemed even more restless. His attire, a long rough overcoat over the livery of his profession, scarcely enhanced the dignity of his appearance.

"Well, what is it?" Laverick asked, as soon as the door was closed.

"Our bar is being watched," the man declared. "I don't think it's anything to do with the police. Seems to be a sort of foreign gang. They're all round the place, morning, noon and night. They've pumped everybody."

"There isn't very much," Laverick remarked slowly, "for them to find out except from you."

"They've found out something, anyway," Shepherd continued. "My junior waiter, unfortunately, who was asleep

in the sitting room, told them he was sure there were customers in the place between ten and twelve on Monday night, because they woke him up twice, talking. They're beginning to look at me a bit doubtful."

"I shouldn't worry," Laverick advised. "The inquest's on now, and you haven't been called. I don't fancy you're running any sort of risk. Anyone may say they believe there were people in the bar between those hours, but there isn't anyone who can contradict you outright. Besides, you haven't sworn to anything. You've simply said that you don't remember anyone."

"It makes me a bit nervous, though," Shepherd remarked apologetically. "They're a regular keen-looking tribe, I can tell you. Their eyes seem to follow you all over the place."

"I shall come in for a drink presently myself," Laverick declared. "I should like to see them. I might get an idea as to their nationality, at any rate."

"Very good, sir. I'm sure I'm doing just as you suggested. I've said nothing about leaving, but I'm beginning to grumble a bit at the work, so as to pave the way. It's a hard job and no mistake. It's more than one man's work, Mr. Laverick."

Laverick assented. "So much the better," he declared. "All the more excuse for your leaving."

"You'll be round some time today, sir, then?" the man asked, taking up his hat.

"I'll look in for a few moments, for certain," Laverick answered; "and you must point out to me one of those fellows."

When Shepherd departed, Laverick sent out for a paper. The account of the inquest was brief, and there were no witnesses called except the men who had found the body. The jury contented themselves with bringing in a verdict of willful murder against "some person or persons unknown." Laverick laid down the paper. The completion of the inquest was at least the first definite step toward safety. The question now before him was what to do with that twenty thousand pounds.

A clerk announcing Mademoiselle Idiale broke in upon his reflections. Laverick rose to greet his visitor. She was handsomely dressed, as usual, yet with the utmost simplicity, a white serge gown with a large black hat, but a gown that seemed to have been molded to her faultless figure. She held out her hand to Laverick, who placed an easy chair for her.

"This is indeed an honor, mademoiselle."

She inclined her head graciously. "You are very kind," she said. "I know that you are busy so I must not stay long. Will you buy me some stocks, some good safe ones which will bring me in at least four per cent?"

"I can promise to do that," Laverick answered. "Have you any choice?"

"No, I have no choice. I bring with me a cheque; it is for six thousand pounds. I would like to buy stocks with this, and to know the names so that I may watch them in the paper; I want to see whether they go up or down. I leave everything to you. Only let me know what you propose."

"We will do our best," Laverick promised.

"It is good," she said. "Money is a wonderful thing. Without it one can do little. You have not forgotten, Mr. Laverick, that you were going to show me this passage?"

"Certainly not. Come with me now. It is only a yard or two away."

He took her out into the street and showed her the entry.

"It was just there," he explained, "about half a dozen yards up on the left, that the body was found."

She gazed at the place steadily. "And directly opposite," she asked, "that is a café, is it not—a restaurant, as you would call it?"

"That is so," he agreed. "One goes there sometimes for a drink."

"And a meeting place, perhaps?" she inquired. "One might leave there and walk down this passage naturally enough."

"As a matter of fact," Laverick declared, "I think that the evidence went to prove that there were no visitors in

the restaurant that night. You see, all these offices close at six or seven o'clock."

She shrugged her shoulders impatiently. "Your English police, they do not know how to collect evidence. In the hands of Frenchmen this mystery would have been solved; the guilty person would be in the hands of the law. As it is, I suppose that he will go free."

"Well, we must give the police a chance, at any rate," answered Laverick. "They haven't had much time so far."

"Come," she exclaimed with a little shiver, "let us go back to your office. This place is not cheerful. All the time I think of that poor man. It does make me frightened."

Laverick escorted his visitor back to the electric brougham which was waiting before his door. He held out his hand, but she seemed in no hurry to let him go.

"You are very kind, Mr. Laverick. I should like to see you again very soon. You have heard me sing in 'Samson and Delilah'?"

"Not yet, but I am hoping to very shortly."

"Tonight," she declared, "you must come to the Opera House. I'll leave a box for you at the door. Send me round a note that you are there, and it is possible that I may see you. It is against the rules, but for me there are no rules."

Laverick hesitating, she leaned forward and looked into his face. "You are doing something else?" she protested. "You were perhaps thinking of taking out again the little girl with whom you were sitting last night?"

"I had half promised—"

"No, no," she exclaimed, holding his hand tighter. "She is not for you—that child. She is too young. She knows nothing. Better to leave her alone. She is not for a man of the world like you. Soon she would cease to amuse you. You would be dull and she would still care. Oh, there is so much tragedy in these things, Mr. Laverick—so much tragedy for the woman! It is she always who suffers. You will take

my advice? You will leave that little girl alone?"

Laverick smiled. "I am afraid," said he, "that I cannot promise that so quickly. You see, I have not known her long, but she has few friends, and I think that she would miss me. Perhaps," he added, "I care for her too much."

"It is not for you," she answered scornfully, "to care too much. An Englishman, he cares never enough. A woman to him is something amusing, his companion for his spare time, something to be pleased about, to show off to his friends, to share, even, the passion of the moment. But an Englishman, he does not care too much; he never cares enough; he does not know what it is to care enough."

"Mademoiselle, there may be truth in what you say, and again there may not. We have the name, I know, of being cold lovers, but at least we are faithful."

She held up her hand with a little grimace. "Oh, how I hate that word!" she exclaimed. "Who is there, indeed, who wishes that you would be faithful? How much we poor women suffer from that! Why can you never understand that a woman would be cared for very, very much, with all the strength and all the passion you can conceive, but let it not last for too long. It gets weary. It gets stale. It is as you say—the Englishman, he cares very little perhaps, but he cares always; and the woman, if she be an artiste and a woman, she tires. But good afternoon, Mr. Laverick. I must not keep you here talking of these frivolous matters. You will come tonight?"

"You are very kind," Laverick said. "If I may come until eleven o'clock, it would give me the greatest pleasure."

"As you will," she declared. "We shall see. I expect you, then. Ask for your box." She smiled and waved her hand. "You will tell him, please," she directed, "to drive to Bond Street."

Laverick reentered his office and was told that Mr. Shepherd wished to speak to him for a moment upon the telephone. He took up the receiver. "You were

outside the restaurant here a few minutes ago," said Shepherd over the wire. "You had with you a lady—a young, tall lady with a veil."

"That's right," Laverick admitted. "What about her?"

"One of the two men who watch always here was reading the paper in the window," Shepherd went on hoarsely. "He saw her with you and I heard him mutter something as though he had received a shock. He dropped his glass and his paper. He watched you every second of the time you were there until you had disappeared. Then he put on his hat and went out. I thought you might like to know this, sir. The man recognized the lady right enough."

"It seems queer," Laverick admitted. "Thank you for ringing me up, Shepherd."

Laverick leaned back in his chair. There was no doubt in his mind that Mademoiselle Idiale for some reason was interested in this crime. Her wish to see the place, her introduction to him and her purchase of stocks were all part of a scheme. He was suddenly convinced of it.

XXIII

Louise left her brougham in Piccadilly and walked across Green Park. Bellamy, who was waiting, rose from a seat. She took his arm and they walked together toward Buckingham Palace.

"My dear David," she said, "the man perplexes me. To look at him, to hear him speak, one would swear that he was honest. He has just those clear blue eyes and the stolid face, half stupid and half splendid, of your athletic Englishman. One would imagine him doing a foolishly honorable thing, but he is not my conception of a criminal at all."

Bellamy kicked a pebble from his path. His forehead wore a perplexed frown. "He didn't give himself away, then?"

"Not in the least."

"He took you out and showed you the spot where it happened?"

"Without an instant's hesitation."

"As a matter of curiosity," asked Bellamy, "did he try to make love to you?"

She shook her head. "I even gave him an opening," she said. "Of flirtation he has no more idea than the average stupid Englishman one meets."

Bellamy was silent for several moments. "I can't believe," he said, "that there is the least doubt that he has the money and the portfolio. I have made one or two other inquiries, and I find that his firm was in very low water only a week ago. They were spoken of, in fact, as being hopelessly insolvent. No one can imagine how they tided over the crisis."

"The man who was watching for you?" she inquired.

"He makes no mistakes," Bellamy assured her. "He saw Laverick enter that passage and come out. Afterward he went back to his office."

"Why do you not go to him openly?" she suggested. "He is an Englishman, and when you tell him what you know he will be in your power. Tell him the value of that document. Tell him that you must have it."

"It could be done," Bellamy admitted. "I think that one of us must talk plainly to him. Listen, Louise—are you seeing him again?"

"I have invited him to come to the Opera House tonight."

"See what you can do," he begged. "I would rather keep away from him myself. Have you heard anything of Streuss?"

"Nothing directly," she replied, "but my rooms have been searched, even my dressing room. That man's spies are simply wonderful. He seems able to plant them everywhere. And, David—he has got hold of Lassen; I am perfectly certain of it."

"Then the sooner you get rid of Lassen the better."

"It is so difficult," she murmured. "The man has all my affairs in his hands. Although he is a brute in many ways, he has served me well. Let us sit down for a few minutes," she said. "I am tired."

She sank upon a seat and Bellamy sat

by her side. In full view of them was Buckingham Palace, with its flag flying. She looked thoughtfully at it and across to Westminster.

"Do they know, I wonder—your countrypeople?" she asked. "They are a stolid, unbelieving people, these. The blow, when it comes, will be the harder."

Bellamy sighed. "You are right," he said. "When one comes to think of it, it is amazing. How long the prophets of woe have preached, and how completely their teachings have been ignored! The invasion bogey has been so long among us that it has become nothing but a jest. Even I, in a way, am one of the unbelievers."

"You are not serious, David!" she exclaimed.

"I am," he affirmed. "I think that if we could read that document we should see that there is no plan there for the immediate invasion of England. I think you would find that the blow would be struck at our colonies. We should either have to submit or send a considerable fleet away from home waters. Then I presume the question of invasion would come again. All the time, of course, the gage would be flung down, treaties would be defied, we should be scorned as though we were a nation of weaklings. Austria would gather in what she wanted, and there would be no one to interfere."

"It is the most terrible thing which has happened in history," Louise said, "this decadence of your country. Once England held the scales of justice for the world. Now she is no longer strong enough, and there is none to take her place. David, even if you knew what that document contains, would it help very much?"

"Very much, indeed. Don't you see that there is one hope left to us—and that is Russia? The Czar must be made to withdraw from that compact. We want to know his share in it. When we know that, there will be a secret mission sent to Russia. Germany and Austria are strong, but they are not all the world. With Russia behind and France and England westward, the struggle is at least an equal one. They

have to face both directions; they have to face two great armies working from the east and from the west."

They sat in silence for several moments. Bellamy was thinking deeply.

"You say, Louise," he asked, looking up quickly, "that your rooms have been searched. When was this?"

"Only last night," she replied.

Bellamy gave a sigh of relief. "At any rate," he said, "Streuss has no idea that the document is not in our possession. He knows nothing about Laverick. How are we going to deal with him when he comes for his answer?"

"You have a plan?" she asked.

"There is only one thing to be done," Bellamy declared. "I shall say that we have already handed over the document to the English Government. It will be a bluff, pure and simple. He may believe it or he may not."

"You will break your compact then," she reminded him.

"I shall call myself justified," he continued. "He has attempted to rob us of the document. You are sure of what you say—that your apartment and dressing room have been searched?"

"Absolutely certain," she declared.

"That will be sufficient," Bellamy decided. "If Streuss comes to me, I shall meet him frankly. I shall tell him that he has tried to play the burglar and that it must be war. I shall tell him that the compact is in the hands of the Prime Minister, and that he and his spies had better clear out."

"Of course you understand," he added, "there is one thing we can do, and one thing only. We must send a mission to Russia and another to France, and before the German fleet can pass down the North Sea we must declare war. It is the only thing left to us—a bold front. Without that packet we have no *casus belli*. With it we can strike, and strike hard. I still believe that if we declare war within seven days we shall save ourselves."

Streuss and Kahn looked, too, across the panorama of London, across the dingy Adelphi Gardens, the turbid Thames, the smoke-hung world beyond.

They were together in Streuss's sitting room on the seventh floor of one of the great Strand hotels.

"Our enterprise is a failure," Kahn exclaimed gloomily. "We cannot doubt it any longer. I think, Streuss, that the best course you and I could adopt would be to realize it and to get back. We do no good here. We only run needless risks."

The face of the other man was dark with anger. His voice, when he spoke, shook with passion.

"You don't know what you say, Kahn!" he cried hoarsely. "I tell you that we must succeed. If that document reaches the hands of anyone in authority here it would be the worst disaster which has fallen upon our country since you or I were born. You don't understand, Kahn. You keep your eyes closed."

"What men can do we have done," the other answered. "Von Behrling played us false. He has died a traitor's death, but it is very certain that he parted with his document before he received that twenty thousand pounds."

"I do not believe it," Streuss declared. "At midday, I can swear to it, the contents of that envelope were unknown to the ministers of the King here. If Von Behrling had parted with that document last Monday night, don't you suppose that everything would be known by now? He did not part with it. Bellamy and Mademoiselle Idiale lie when they say that they possess it. That document remains in the possession of Von Behrling's murderer, and it is for us to find him."

Kahn sighed. "It is outside our sphere, that. What can we do against the police of this country working in their own land?"

Streuss struck the table before which they were standing. The veins in his temples were like whipcord.

"Adolf," he muttered, "you talk like a fool! Can't you see what it means? If that document reaches its destination, what do you suppose will happen?"

"They will know our plans, of course," Kahn answered. "They will have time to make preparation."

Streuss laughed bitterly. "Worse than that!" he exclaimed. "They are not all fools, these English statesmen. Can't you see what the result would be if that document reaches Downing Street? War at a moment's notice—war six months too soon! Don't you know that every shipbuilding yard in Germany is working night and day? Don't you know that every nerve is being strained, that the muscles of the country are hammering the rivets into new battleships? There is but one chance for this country, and if her statesmen read that document they will know what it is. It is open to them to destroy the German navy utterly, to render themselves secure against attack. I tell you that document is still to be bought or fought for, and we must find it. This morning Mademoiselle Idiale drove into the City and called at the offices of a stockbroker within a dozen yards of Crooked Friars Alley. She was there a long time. The stockbroker himself came out with her into the street and took her to see the entry. What was her interest in him, Kahn? His name is Laverick. Four days ago he was on the brink of ruin. To the amazement of everyone he met all his engagements. Why did she go to the City to see him? He was at his office late that Tuesday night. He had a partner who has disappeared."

Kahn looked at his companion with admiration. "You have found all this out?" he exclaimed.

"And more," Streuss declared. "For twenty-four hours this man has not moved without my spies at his heels."

"Why not approach him boldly?" Kahn suggested. "If he has the document, let us outbid Mademoiselle Louise, and do it quickly."

Streuss shook his head. "You don't know the man. He is an Englishman, and if he had any idea what that document contained our chances of buying it would be small indeed. This is what I think will happen: Mademoiselle will try to obtain it, and fail. Then Bellamy will tell him the truth, and he will part with it willingly. In the meantime I believe it is in his possession."

"The evidence is slender enough," objected Kahn.

"What if it is?" Streuss exclaimed. "If it is only a hundred-to-one chance, we have to take it."

The telephone bell rang. Streuss took the receiver and held it to his ear. When he laid the instrument down there was a look of satisfaction in his face.

"At any rate," he announced, "Laverick did not part with the document today. Mademoiselle and Bellamy have been sitting in the park for an hour. When they separated, she drove home and dropped him at his club. Up till now they have not the document. We shall see what Laverick does when he leaves business this evening; if he goes straight home, either the document has never been in his possession or else it is in the safe in his office; if he goes to Mademoiselle Idiale's—there is still a chance for us."

XXIV

LAVERICK, in presenting his card at the box office at Covent Garden that evening, did so without the slightest misconception of the reasons which had prompted Mademoiselle Idiale to beg him to become her guest. It was sheer curiosity which prompted him to pursue this adventure. He was convinced that personally he had no interest for her. In some way or other he had become connected in her mind with the murder, and in some equally mysterious manner that murder had become a subject of interest to her.

He found an excellent box reserved for him, and a measure of courtesy from the attendants not often vouchsafed to an ordinary visitor. Even before her wonderful voice thrilled the house, it seemed to Laverick that no person more lovely than the woman he had come to see had ever moved upon any stage. It appeared impossible that movement so graceful and passionate should remain so absolutely effortless. There seemed to be some strange power inside the woman. Surely her will guided her feet! The necessity for physical effort never once appeared. Notwithstanding

the slight prejudice which he had felt against her, it was impossible to keep his admiration altogether in check. The fascination of her wonderful presence, her glorious voice, moved him with the rest of the audience.

Just before the curtain rose upon the second act, there was a knock at his box door. One of the attendants ushered in a short man of somewhat remarkable personality. He was barely five feet in height, and an extremely fat neck and a corpulent body gave him almost the appearance of a hunchback. He had black, beady eyes, a black mustache fiercely turned up, and sallow skin. His white gloves had curious stitchings on the back not common in England, and his silk hat, exceedingly glossy, had a wider brim than is usually associated with Bond Street.

"My dear sir," he began, "I owe you many apologies. It was Mademoiselle Idiale's wish that I should make your acquaintance. My name is Lassen. I have the fortune to be mademoiselle's business manager."

"I am very glad to meet you, Mr. Lassen," said Laverick. "Will you sit down?"

Mr. Lassen thereupon hung his hat upon a peg, removed his overcoat, straightened his white tie with the aid of a looking glass, brushed back his glossy black hair with the palms of his hands and took the seat opposite Laverick. His first question was inevitable.

"What do you think of the opera, sir?"

"It is like Mademoiselle Idiale herself," Laverick answered. "It is above criticism."

"She is," Mr. Lassen said firmly, "the loveliest woman in Europe, and her voice is the most wonderful. It is a great combination, this. I myself have managed for many stars; I have brought to England most of those whose names are known during the last ten years; but there has never been another Louise Idiale—never will be."

"I can believe it," Laverick admitted.

"Your acquaintance with her, I believe, sir, is of the shortest."

"That is so," Laverick answered, a little coldly.

"Mademoiselle has spoken to me of you," Lassen proceeded. "She desired that I should pay my respects during the performance."

"It is very kind of you," Laverick answered. "It is exceedingly kind, also, of Mademoiselle Idiale to insist upon my coming here tonight. She did me the honor, as you may know, of paying me a visit this morning."

"So she did tell me," Mr. Lassen declared. "Mademoiselle is a great woman of business. Most of her investments she controls herself. She has whims, however, and it never does to contradict her. She has also, curiously enough, a preference for men of affairs."

Laverick nodded and took up his programme and turned deliberately toward the stage. The little man had paid his respects. Laverick felt disinclined for further conversation with him. Yet he knew very well that his companion's eyes were fixed upon him. He had an uncomfortable sense that he was an object of more than ordinary interest to this visitor, that he had come for some specific object.

"You will like to go round and see mademoiselle?" the latter remarked, some time afterward.

Laverick shook his head. "I shall find another opportunity, I hope, to congratulate her."

"But she expects to see you," Mr. Lassen protested. "You are here at her invitation. It is usual, I can assure you." He made some excuse to leave the box a few minutes later. When he returned, he carried a note which he presented to Laverick with an air of triumph.

I wish to see you after the performance. If you cannot come round or escort me yourself, will you come later to the restaurant of Luigi, where, as always, I shall sup? Do not fail.

LOUISE IDIALE.

"You will certainly come?" Lassen asked anxiously.

"Without a doubt," Laverick promised.

At a few minutes before eleven La-

verick left the place and drove to the stage door of the Universal Theater. Zoe came out among the first.

"Oh, how nice of you!" she exclaimed, stepping at once into his taxicab. "You don't know how different it feels to hope that there is someone waiting for you and then to find your hope come true. Tonight I was not sure. You had said nothing about it, and yet I could not help believing that you would be here."

"I was hoping," he said, "that we might have another supper together. Unfortunately, I have an engagement."

"An engagement?" she repeated, her face falling.

"It is rather an odd thing," he declared. "You remember that woman at Luigi's last night—Mademoiselle Idiale?"

"Of course."

"She came to my office today and gave me six thousand pounds to invest for her. Then she insisted that I should go and hear her sing this evening, and I find that I was expected to take her to supper afterward. I excused myself for a little while, but I have promised to go to Luigi's, where she will be."

The girl was silent for a moment. "Where are we going now, then?" she asked.

"Wherever you like. I can take you home first, or I can leave you anywhere."

"No, you must take me home, please," said she. "Mademoiselle Idiale is such a wonderful person. Do you think that she will want you every night?"

"Of course not," he laughed. "Come, I will make an engagement with you. We'll have supper together tomorrow evening."

She brightened up at once. "I wonder," she asked timidly, "have you heard anything from Arthur? He promised to send a telegram from Queenstown."

Laverick shook his head. He said nothing about the marconigram he had sent, or the answer which he had received informing him that there was no such person on board. It seemed scarcely worth while to worry her.

"I have heard nothing," he replied. "Of course, he must be halfway to America by now. But there is one thing you ought to do with me. I think we ought to go to his rooms and lock up his papers and letters. He never even went back, you know, after that night. I am afraid I can spare no time until Monday afternoon. We will go then."

They had reached her home. It looked very dark and uninviting. She shivered as she took her latchkey from her bag.

"Come in with me, please, while I light the gas," she begged.

He stood in the passage while she felt for a box of matches and lit the gas jet. In the parlor there was a bowl of milk standing waiting for her, and some bread.

"Thank you so much," she said. "Now I am going to make up the fire and read for a short time. I hope that you will enjoy your supper—well, moderately," she added, with a little laugh.

"I can promise you," he answered, "that I shall enjoy it no more than last night's or tomorrow night's."

She sighed. "Poor little me!" she exclaimed. "It is not fair to have to compete with Mademoiselle Idiale. Good night."

Something he saw in her eyes moved him strangely as he turned away.

"Would you like me," he asked hesitatingly, "supposing I get away early—would you like me to come in and say good night to you later on?"

"Oh, do!" she begged. "Do! I shall stay here until three o'clock," she declared—"until four, even. You must come. Remember, you must come. See!" She held out to him her key.

"I can knock at the door," he protested. "You would hear me."

"But I might fall asleep," she answered. "I am afraid. If you have the key, I am sure that you will come."

He put it in his pocket with a laugh. "Very well," he said, "if it is only for five minutes, I will come."

XXV

LAVERICK walked into Luigi's at about a quarter to twelve, and found the

place crowded with many little supper parties on their way to a fancy dress ball. The demand for tables was far in excess of the supply, but he had scarcely shown himself before the *maître d'hôtel* came hurrying up.

"Mademoiselle Idiale is waiting for you, sir," he announced at once. "Will you be so good as to come this way?"

Laverick followed him. She was alone, but the table was laid for two.

"You have treated me," she said, as she held out her fingers, "to a new sensation. I have waited for you alone here for a quarter of an hour—I! Such a thing has never happened to me before."

"You do me too much honor," Laverick declared, seating himself and taking up the card. "For supper—"

"It is ordered," she declared. "You are my guest."

"Impossible!" Laverick asserted firmly. "I have been your guest at the Opera. You at least owe me the honor of being mine for supper."

She frowned a little. She was obviously unused to being contradicted.

"I sup with you, then, another night," she insisted. "No," she continued, "if you are going to look like that, I take it back. I sup with you tonight. This is an ill omen for our future acquaintance. I have given in to you already—I, who give in to no man. Give me some champagne, please."

"I drink to our better understanding of one another, Mr. Laverick," she said, raising her glass. "And, if you would like a double toast, I drink also to the early gratification of the curiosity which is consuming you."

"The curiosity?"

"Yes. You are wondering all the time why it is that I chose last night to send and have you presented to me, why I came to your office today with the excuse of investing money with you, why I invited you to the Opera tonight, why I commanded you to supper here and am supping with you alone. Now confess the truth. You are full of curiosity; is it not so?"

"Frankly, I am."

She smiled good-humoredly. "I knew

it quite well. You are not conceited. You do not believe, as so many men would, that I have fallen in love with you. You think that there must be some object, and you ask yourself all the time, 'What is it?' In your heart, Mr. Laverick, I wonder whether you have any idea?"

Laverick drank his wine slowly. The woman knew! Impossible! Her eyes were watching his face, but he held himself bravely. What could she know? How could she guess?

"Frankly," he said, "I do not understand."

"The murdered man," she declared thoughtfully, "was an acquaintance of mine."

"An acquaintance of yours!" Laverick exclaimed. "Why, he has not been identified. No one knows who he was."

She raised her eyebrows slightly. "Mr. Laverick," she murmured, "the newspapers do not tell you everything. I repeat that the murdered man was an acquaintance of mine. Only three days ago I traveled part of the way from Vienna with him."

Laverick was intensely interested. "You could, perhaps, throw some light, then, upon his death?"

"Perhaps I could," she answered. "I can tell you one thing, at any rate, Mr. Laverick, if it is news to you. At the time when he was murdered, he was carrying a very large sum of money with him. This is a fact which has not been spoken of in the press."

Once again Laverick was thankful for those nerves of his. He sat quite still. His face exhibited nothing more than the blank amazement which he certainly felt.

"This is marvelous," he said. "Have you told the police?"

"I have not," she answered. "I wish, if I can, to avoid telling the police."

"But the money? To whom did it belong?"

"Not to the murdered man."

"To anyone whom you know of?" he inquired.

"I wonder," she said, after a moment of hesitation, "whether I am telling you too much?"

"You are telling me a good deal," he admitted frankly.

"I wonder how far," she asked, "you will be inclined to reciprocate?"

"I reciprocate!" he exclaimed. "But what can I do? What do I know of these things?"

She stretched out her hand lazily, and drew toward her a wonderful gold purse set with emeralds. Carefully opening it, she drew from the interior a small flat pocketbook, also of gold, with a great uncut emerald set into its center. This, too, she opened, and drew out several sheets of foreign notepaper pinned together at the top. Then she bent one down and passed it across the table to Laverick.

"You may read that," she said. "It is part of a report which I have had in my possession since Wednesday morning."

Laverick drew the sheet toward him and read, in thin, angular characters, very distinct and plain:

Some ten minutes after the assault, a policeman passed down the street but did not glance toward the passage. The next person to appear was a gentleman who left some office on the same side as the passage, and walked down evidently on his way home. He glanced up the passage and saw the body lying there. He disappeared for a moment and struck a match. A minute afterward he emerged from the passage, looked up and down the street, and finding it empty returned to the office from which he had issued, let himself in with his latchkey, and closed the door behind him. He was there for about ten minutes. When he reappeared, he walked quickly down the street and for obvious reasons I was unable to follow him.

The office which he left and reentered was that of Messrs. Laverick & Morrison, stockbrokers.

"That interests you, Mr. Laverick?" she asked softly.

He handed it back to her.

"It interests me very much," he answered. "Who was this unseen person who wrote from the clouds?"

"I may not tell you all my secrets, Mr. Laverick," she declared. "What have you done with that twenty thousand pounds?"

Laverick helped himself to champagne. He listened for a moment to the music, and looked into the wonderful eyes which shone from that beautiful

face a few feet away. Her lips were slightly parted, her forehead wrinkled. There was nothing of the accuser in her countenance; a gentle irony was its most poignant expression.

"Is this a fairy tale, Mademoiselle Idiale?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "It might seem so," she answered. "Sometimes I think that all the time we live two lives—the life of which the world sees the outside, and the life inside of which no one save ourselves knows anything at all. Look, for instance, at all these people—these chorus girls and young men about town—the older ones, too—all hungry for pleasure, all drinking at the cup of life as though they had indeed but today and tomorrow in which to live and enjoy. Have they no shadows, too, no secrets? They seem so harmless, yet if the great white truth shone down, might one not find a murderer there, a dying man who knew his terrible secret, yonder a Croesus on the verge of bankruptcy, a strong man playing with dishonor? But those are the things of the other world which we do not see. The men look at us tonight and they envy you because you are with me. The women envy me more because I have emeralds upon my neck and shoulders for which they would give their souls, and a fame throughout Europe which would turn their foolish heads in a very few minutes. But they do not know. There are the shadows across my path, and I think that there are the shadows across yours. What do you say, Mr. Laverick?"

He looked at her, curiously moved. Now at last he began to believe that it was true what they said of her, that she was indeed a marvelous woman. She had a fame which would have contented nine hundred and ninety-nine women out of a thousand. She had beauty, and, more wonderful still, the grace, the fascination which is irresistible. She had but to lift a finger and there were few who would not kneel to do her bidding. And yet, behind it all there were other things in her life. Had

she sought them, or had they come to her?

"You are one of those wise people, Mr. Laverick," she said, "who realize the danger of words. You believe in silence. Well, silence is often good. You do not choose to admit anything."

"What is there for me to admit? Do you want to know whether I am the man who left those offices, who disappeared into the passage, who reappeared again—"

"With a pocketbook containing twenty thousand pounds," she murmured across the flowers.

"At least tell me this?" he demanded. "Was the money yours?"

"I am not like you," she replied. "I have talked a great deal and I have reached the limit of the things which I may tell you."

"But where are we?" he asked. "Are you seriously accusing me of having robbed this murdered man?"

"Be thankful," she declared, "that I am not accusing you of having murdered him."

"But, seriously," he insisted, "am I on my defense—have I to account for my movements that night as against the written word of your mysterious informant? Is it you who are charging me with being a thief? Is it to you I am to account for my actions, to defend myself or to plead guilty?"

She shook her head.

"No," she answered. "I have said almost my last word to you upon this subject. All that I have to ask of you is this. If that pocketbook is in your possession, empty it first of its contents, then go over it carefully with your fingers and see if there is not a secret pocket. If you discover that, I think that you will find in it a sealed document. If you find that document, you must bring it to me."

The lights went down. The voice of the waiter murmured something in his ear.

"It is after hours," Mademoiselle Idiale said, "but Luigi does not wish to disturb us. Still, perhaps we had better go."

(To be continued.)

A GREEN THEATRICAL CHRISTMAS

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

SO are we inclined to predict from the recent pleasurable absence of what polished Broadway is disposed to call "frosts." "But 'The Other Fellow'?" you ask. A mere passing dramatic chilblain! "And 'Electricity'?" you insist. An already melted mere dramatic water ice! A green theatrical Christmas, gentlemen—but let not our joy be undefined.

By way of initial definition and analysis, let us elect "**THE GAMBLERS**," far and away the worthiest drama that Charles Klein has yet imagined. Save for a period of two minutes in the third act, during which there is permitted to occur one of the familiar Klein patent "Ah, yes, but trooth is trooth!" dialogues, the play discloses a fine, sturdy craftsmanship that has succeeded in presenting a species of Charles W. Morse misadventure in a highly sympathetic and constantly interesting fashion. Above everything else, mention is to be recorded of the cunning and unquestionably effective employment by the dramatist, who personally staged his product, of various thetic tricks of suspense, reminiscent now and again of a similar skill uncovered by William Gillette in his proscenium silhouette of "*Sherlock Holmes*." The insinuation that secret service agents are spying on the bankers' meeting from the house across the street; a revolver placed in Emerson's pocket in Act I and never to be seen or heard from again; the shadow of a detective hiding on the balcony thrown against the window pane during an attempted

transfer of papers by two persons in the room before you; the door to an inside room that refuses to open, inferring a possible suicide, when in reality the man behind the door is doing nothing more serious than taking a bath—all these and others are worked to potent meningitic ends.

Set a thief to catch an audience, is the axiomatic theatrical proverb Mr. Klein has followed in his play, the story of which, admirably interpreted by a cast including George Nash, Charles Stevenson and Miss Jane Cowl, concerns Wilbur Emerson, who, to save his father's name, consents to act as the scapegoat of the fund juggling bank directors, and who starts out to steal an incriminating document that has found its way into the District Attorney's home. He is discovered there by the prosecutor, who returns unexpectedly and places the worst meaning—as far as his wife is concerned—on Emerson's presence in the house. Emerson is placed under arrest; the District Attorney's wife gives him the document that would have sealed his father's fate, and the final curtain—like the final curtain in Gillette's "*Secret Service*"—falls on the good-bye between the man and woman who have come to know their mutual love. Mrs. Darwin is to get a divorce. Emerson is to go to the penitentiary. "*To Libby Prison!*" sobs the girl. "Yes, dear, but the war will soon be over," he answers her. And the girl will be waiting for him. That is the "*Secret Service*" restaurant scramble signal. "*To the peniten-*

tiary!" says Mrs. Darwin through her tears. "Yes, dear, but when I come out—" Emerson begins. "When you come out—when you are a free man," she promises, "I'll be waiting for you." And the tackles-back formation in the direction of the Knickerbocker grill gets under way. "**THE GAMBLERS**," viewed in its entirety, is one of the best plays in New York today; it is one of the three best constructed dramas that have come from an American pen in the last three years; and it is a cute demonstration of the fact that a playwright—some managers and more actors to the contrary notwithstanding—frequently does know a little bit, after all, about the way his drama ought to be produced.

It is a matter of profound regret to me that in this review of Mr. Avery Hopwood's latest play, "**Nobody's Widow**," I shall be unable to give you an outline of the plot. This, however, is Mr. Hopwood's fault, not mine. The truth is he forgot to include a plot in his play. His oversight, however, has turned out to be of no serious consequence. A plot might have spoiled the whole thing. A plot is so often annoying. It makes one stop to think and interrupts one's contemplation of beautiful gowns and scenic pictures and wonderful lighting effects and curious furniture. In any Belasco production this is true twice in the same place. A plot in a Belasco production is not nearly of as much moment as the physical production itself—to the audience. While viewing Pierpont Morgan's art gallery, you would not care a rap to hear the story of Mr. Morgan's Wall Street battles, and while viewing one of David Belasco's dramatic art galleries, you care even less to be bothered with a plot. It is sufficient in "**Nobody's Widow**" that Blanche Bates and Bruce McRae loll about delightfully in the usual soothing Belasco scenic environment; that the soft Palm Beach Belasco moonlight "effects" cause you quite unconsciously to take hold of the hand of the beautiful young lady in the next seat, though she be a total stranger to you; and even that what sport there is in the play should be derived from the extravagantly naughty idea of a legally

married man and woman finding themselves alone in the same bedchamber at two o'clock in the morning. In several of its phases, "**Nobody's Widow**" bears a surface resemblance to "**An American Widow**," produced last year in this same theater (the Hudson) by Henry B. Harris. But, in every one of its phases, araneous as they are, this newest of Belasco entertainments is quite thoroughly inviting and is as artistically appetizing as anchovy *au Hemrèvre*.

What is the last thing in the world you would expect to find in the New Theater? Close your eyes, seize the arms of your chair and think hard. The work of an American playwright? No, you are wrong. Think once more. A playgoer not in evening dress? Again you are wrong—but you are getting "warm." What, I repeat, is the last thing you would expect to discover in an institution that has been charged with a clannish predilection for aristocratic exclusiveness by the critical thelphusians? . . . Correct! You may go to the head of the class. The New Theater has invested itself with a free lunch so delicious as to make the very mouth water. Luscious olives that bathe the palate with strange and sweetly bitter juices; succulent radishes that crackle cool under the feverish teeth; crisp, salt-sprinkled dear little pretzels; and all the coördinate gratuitous courses to be found in any merely commercial ginmill. The New Theater has at last vindicated its Americanism! Upstairs, through its presentations of Shakespeare's "**Merry Wives of Windsor**" and Pinero's drama "**The Thunderbolt**," the New Theater has won a further just artistic commendation. The Falstaffian farce, superbly mounted and in the main intelligently interpreted, has awakened fresh interest in the Elizabethan curio, and the presentation of the Pinero study of English provincial sordidness has disclosed a truly rare specimen of thoroughly satisfactory cabotinage. In this latter drama, the powers of the theater's permanent band of players are revealed in their fullest force and from Louis Calvert, in the role of the bullying, greed-filled James Morti-

more, to the ocularly stimulating Miss Wyndham, as the illegitimate child of the late Mortimore, out of whose will the dramatic caddle is germinated, there is nary a Thespian but vivifies the script with complete acceptability. The story of the play has to do with the destruction of the last testament, that has bequeathed all to Mortimore's spurious child, by the wife of the deceased's brother, so that she and the rest of the money hungry family may benefit thereby, and of the way in which the illegitimate Helen, upon learning of the deceit, declares for an equal distribution of her father's gold. It is a muscular piece of dramatic machinery, ugly but instinct with life, and it stands a fine testimonial to the efficiency of the New Theater when it comes to doing good things well.

Thompson Buchanan has a beautiful sense of humor. Which is probably one reason why he did not remain in newspaper work. While covering the story of a murder trial in a little up-State village one December afternoon five years ago, he shocked the bucolic court by marching up the aisle and proffering to the accused—a very pretty little girl who was sobbing out her heart—a copious dish of vanilla ice cream. The judge, a venerable old hayseed, was scandalized and sought to reprimand Buchanan. "But, Your Honor," protested the latter with a dry look, "this trial was becoming altogether too impressive." And besides, as Buchanan subsequently whispered in our right ear, he had won an engagement with a fair country lass for five o'clock and did not care to be bothered with writing up too lengthy a so-called "human interest" story. In his latest play, "*THE CUB*," Mr. Buchanan has applied his sense of fun to the Kentucky mountain feuds, revealed through the eyes of a green reporter who has been sent into the thick of the trouble to get the story for a Louisville newspaper. And the result is a presentation that has been likened by the critics to the famous works of Charles Hoyt, the grand old man of American farce. With the possible exception of "*Baby Mine*," "*THE CUB*"

is the most amusing thing of its kind seen hereabouts in many a day. It is fresh, thoroughly native, unaffected, honestly novel and certainly funny. And a funny farce is about as rare in these times as a dramatic drama. Douglas Fairbanks plays the cub reporter after his usual attractive manner. Mr. Fairbanks is one of the few young men of our stage who does not have to rely on his clothes for magnetic qualities.

Brothers Brady and Frohman are our leading dramatic revivalists. Of Brother Brady's "*Jim the Penman*" and "*Diplomacy*" preachings we have already made chronicle. It is to Brother Frohman that we now shall turn. Within the last month or so, this able Fra has made revivals of the beloved swallow-tailed crook "*Raffles*," of the wit-glittering Wilde's "*IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*," and of the sterling Gillette repertoire. One has not been less commendable than another. The bringing back to stage life of the Wilde farce, following its contemporaneous vogue in the English capital, was particularly gratifying. Wilde's satirical nips and quips, amply exemplified in the play in point, seem to have become doubly penetrating with age. Of them all, there stands but a single one, "*A married man is interesting only to his wife*," that appears to have been affected by our more highly developed social conditions of the present day. Wilde, in company with the late Hermann the Great, Mark Twain, Bessie McCoy, Eckersall the University of Chicago quarterback, and Eddie Guerin the bank robber, is one of the meager fistful of individuals who, whether in death or in life, have actually merited and do still merit the baptismal adjective "clever." Upon Fra Frohman's head we herewith sprinkle this selfsame adjetival eulogy, for his managerial wisdom and astuteness in having given us all another good healthy look at this zoolak de la zoolak farce and in having sensed the fact that the cold weather has braced up our old friend, the tired tradesman, sufficiently to permit him to half realize that the highest form of wit is not necessarily always that

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which is encased in silk openwork stockings.

In "GETTING A POLISH," in which the Lieblers are presenting May Irwin, Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson have evidently endeavored to create another "Man from Home" with a female central character in place of a Daniel Voorhees Pike. Instead of Kokomo, Indiana, they have made it Yellow Dog, Montana, and instead of transferring the homely but honest Americans to Sorrento, they have made it Paris. That is all. Otherwise, it's the same old pair of pants. Miss Irwin is humorous in the role of the woman from home who shows herself up among the foreign gilt furniture and who is glad to get back to cane seat principles in the third act.

I challenge any member of the critical confraternity to produce out of his scrap book a single review of a Willie Collier farce in which there does not occur something to the effect that "while the present vehicle is not as good as some others in which this comedian has appeared, it nevertheless serves, et cetera." It has come to be a matter of common regard that no Collier show is "quite up to the standard" of any other Collier show. Even the first Collier show had to be declared inferior to something. The whole thing is a sort of annual habit, like wishing for a fur overcoat or dropping a Canadian dime into the Salvation Army's Christmas kettles. Following the usual custom, this year's Collier farce, called "I'LL BE HANGED IF I DO," is not quite as good as some of its predecessors, despite the fact that it really is.

THE BACHELOR BELLES

(Smith and Hubbell)

A tranquil tune show introducing the titillating Danish terpsichorean treasure Adeline Genee, together with some beautifully filled American hosiery, a melodious larynx yclept Eva Fallon and some nice green scenery.

MR. PREEDY AND THE COUNTESS
(R. C. Carton)

Weodon Grossmith and fine British support in a diverting French-smacking farce. The support includes a Miss Sheila Heseltine, the dreamiest dream that has come out of The Fog in years.

NAUGHTY MARIETTA
(Herbert and Young)

Emma Trentini and Orville Harrold in a truly delicious, ear filling musical evening, impolitely interrupted at odd intervals by a libretto that found vast favor with the natives of Rochester, Syracuse and other outlying bald spots.

THE SPECKLED BAND
(A. Conan Doyle)

The creepiest of the Sherlock Holmes stories done into stage form with Charles Millward in the role of the deductive snake charmer.

THE GIRL AND THE KAISER
(Buchbinder and Jano)

Lulu Glaser in an American version of "Die Forster Christ'l." Excellent music and colorful production.

THE NEST EGG
(Anna Caldwell)

A very commendable rural farce with Zelda Sears as the principal chicken.

ELECTRA

(Murray out of Euripides)

The Coburn Players in one of the best two-hour sleeps of the present theatrical season.

HENRY OF NAVARRE
(William Devereux)

An admixture of Huguenots, trysts, intrigues, Ducs, swords and language served up in the approved "romantic" style by Fred Terry, Julia Neilson and their able acting cohort.

THE LEADING AMERICAN NOVELIST

By H. L. MENCKEN

WHO is he? Howells? Howells was, perhaps, in his time—but that was before he began to believe it himself. James? James is no more an American than the Sultan of Sulu. Herrick? Chambers? McCutcheon? Hopkinson Smith? Dr. Mitchell? Not one of those heaven kissing heroes of the \$1.08 counter. A lady, perhaps? Mrs. Wharton? See James, Henry. Mrs. Atherton? Anna Katherine Green? Mrs. Eddy? Again no. Get a good grip upon the mantel shelf; I am about to name my candidate. He is David Graham Phillips. Laugh as much as you like! Laugh until you are tired—and then read "THE HUNGRY HEART" and "THE HUSBAND'S STORY" (*Appleton*, \$1.50).

You will find in both of these stories, and you will find, too, in other books by Mr. Phillips, though not in all of them, two qualities so rare in contemporary American fiction that the reader of current novels seldom encounters even faint traces of them. One is the quality of earnestness and the other is the quality of intelligence. Mr. Phillips writes as if novel writing were a serious business, demanding preparation, reflection, ardor, skill. He seems to be firmly convinced that the people whose doings he is describing are real human beings, that their overt acts are the effects of deep lying motives and causes, and that it is worth while to tunnel down into them and get at those motives and causes. Stranger still, he himself has mental processes. He thinks! Contemplating his characters, he is led to

meditate and philosophize upon the internal and external *stimuli* which make them what they are. And passing from what they are to what they represent, he investigates the general conditions of human existence in the United States, differentiating between things universal and things American, ferreting out national weaknesses and racial diseases, prying into the peculiar customs, vices, superstitions, emotions, traditions and diatheses which separate an American from an Englishman, a Zulu or the bisque hero of a best seller.

The man, of course, is an anarchist. Such earnestness is revolutionary, dangerous, insulting, abominable. The purpose of novel writing, as that crime is practised in the United States, is not to interpret life, but to varnish, veil and perfume life—to make it a merry round of automobiling, country clubbing, seduction, money making and honeymooning, with music by Victor Herbert. Novelists succeed among us in proportion as they keep outside the skin. But Mr. Phillips does not bid for success in that way. He boldly ventures upon hazardous psychological laparotomies; he insists upon making indecent cross sections of the American woman; he looks for the roots of ideals, not in the heart, but in the stomach; he orates vociferously all the while he is at work. The first impression he produces is that he is merely a noisy and lawless fellow; the second is that his remarks are interesting but untrue; the third is that there may be some truth in them;

the last is that, whether true or false, they are at least worth hearing and heeding, as the conclusions of a man who has approached his task seriously, who has brought to it an excellent technical equipment, and whose efforts to accomplish something worth while are sincere, dignified and praiseworthy.

This is no place to examine into the validity of Mr. Phillips's ideas. Whether it is true or not, as he holds in "*THE HUNGRY HEART*" and "*THE HUSBAND'S STORY*," that the American woman is the chief foe of American civilization, the fact remains that he is entitled to his opinion, that he supports it with vigor and ingenuity, and that the mere possession of an intelligible opinion upon such a subject is sufficient to lift him head and shoulders above ninety-nine per cent of his fictioneering rivals. The trouble with the average American novelist is that he has no opinions at all; he never thinks. He can neither create characters nor arrive at thoughts about them. The personages of his fable appear to him, not as human beings moved by impulse, motive, inherited trait and environmental pressure, but as stuffed dummies worked by wires, and so it is as stuffed dummies that they appear to the rest of us. I read novel after novel without encountering a single idea. Therefore, when I happen upon one that is full of ideas, I rejoice and am exceeding glad, and shout the news at the top of my voice.

"*THE HUSBAND'S STORY*," as a work of art, is far from perfect. If Mr. Phillips, before sending his manuscript to the printers, had hired me to read it, I should have advised him against elevating the Lorings to such dizzy peaks of social splendor, for thereby he robbed them of a good deal of their value as types. Social climbing is an almost universal vice in the United States. It even prevails among Maryland negroes. But not more than one American in ten millions ever achieves the stupendous ascent of Edna Loring. I should have advised Mr. Phillips, in the second place, against the folly of hurling too many direct insults at the devourers of best sellers, for their money

is good and many of them are human. But after favoring him with these warnings, I should have thanked him for the privilege of reading an American novel with fire and frenzy in it and the proofs of an unmistakable talent—and returned his honorarium with the script.

THE merits so assertively apparent in Mr. Phillips's story are wanting in "*AILSA PAGE*," by Robert W. Chambers (*Appleton*, \$1.50), a machine-made tale by a man whose early work makes it impossible for him to plead that he can do no better. The time is that of the Civil War, and all of the characters are drawn into the conflict, but the note of overpowering tragedy, the sense of closeness to great events, the color and clangor of the period—these things are wholly absent. Instead of tragedy we have preposterous melodrama. Instead of veritable human beings we have those ancient marionettes—the stern father, the prodigal redeemed by valor, the erring maiden redeemed by love. There are battle scenes enough and to spare, but not one of them grips the imagination. Altogether, it is a trashy and an irritating story, and scarcely worthy a serious review. Much better stuff is to be found in "*BURNING DAYLIGHT*," by Jack London (*Macmillan*, \$1.50), the history of a barbarian who wrests millions from the frozen North, comes thundering down to pillage civilization—and then discovers that nothing but degradation is to be got out of such rapines. In the scenes laid in the Klondike Mr. London is at his very best. He knows the country and he knows its people, and he sets both before us with extraordinary vividness. Later on there is a falling off, but the general effect is that of a capital story. Burning Daylight, in brief, is the most lifelike figure in all Mr. London's gallery of Goths and Huns, and Dede Mason, who leads him up to grace, is quite the most charming woman the author has ever set before us.

Now come some belated Christmas books—yet not so belated, for though this is the January number, you will get it a full ten days before Christmas.

Let me venture the hope that you will devote ten minutes of that time to buying half a dozen copies of W. J. Locke's "A CHRISTMAS MYSTERY" (*Lane*, 75 cents) for your friends. No more genuinely moving and heart searching Christmas tale has ever been written than this little story of the three wise men of England and of what befell them on Christmas morning. Locke was never more fantastic, never more artistic. Another good Christmas story, though greatly different in character, is "ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN THE EVENING," by Grace S. Richmond (*Doubleday-Page*, 50 cents), which comes in a pretty holly-strewn wrapper. Yet other books suitable to the season are "THE GOLDEN HEART," the annual volume of Ralph Henry Barbour (*Lippincott*, \$1.50), with pictures in color by Clarence F. Underwood; "LET ME FEEL YOUR PULSE," the last tale of the lamented O. Henry (*Doubleday-Page*, 50 cents), and "THE FLOWERS" (*Harper's*, 75 cents), a pretty little story by Margarita Spalding Gerry, with exquisite drawings in color by Elizabeth Shippen Green.

"THESE pages have no other general purpose than to point out that we cannot create anything good until we have conceived it." Thus the eternally diverting but never converting Gilbert K. Chesterton lays down the thesis of his latest volume of philippics and exhortations, which appears between covers of a sullen, venous red and under the characteristically modest title of "WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD" (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.50). That thesis is a platitude so all-fired platitudinous that it stings the roof of the mouth, but even so excessively platitudinous a platitude, as Mr. Chesterton himself somewhere admits, is often quite true. So with this one. Its truth is as obvious as the rotundity of Mr. Taft. Therefore, why rage and roar over it—to the extent of nearly four hundred pages? Suppose it to be a fact that our system of education is getting us nowhere—what of it? Maybe most of us are happy where we are! Suppose it to be a fact that our

174 warring sects are getting precious few of us into Heaven—who cares? Isn't it a fact that nine-tenths of us, like the melancholy shades in "Man and Superman," prefer Hell? Mr. Chesterton, in brief, is quite right in his diagnosis, but he makes the tremendous error of regarding native cussedness as a curable disease. As a matter of fact, we blunder along, barking our shins at every step and walking straight into every tree, not because we need quinine, but because that is the happy-go-lucky human way. If it were not for the fun of watching the other fellow gouge out his eyes and break his neck, we might stop to lament our own lacerations. As it is, we hail life as the greatest of adventures and accept without protest the trivial fact that it is meaningless. Imagine it as the orderly and tedious march Mr. Chesterton would make it, with all hands trooping up the celestial gangplank in a lockstep, for bidden to laugh, swear or eat peanuts—sweet symbols of dissolute irresponsibility—and clubbed into line by ecclesiastics on muleback! What man worthy the name would care to live?

Let us alone, O Fat Mullah! Take back your golden fiddles! We are happy in our wallow. We are even beginning to produce a literature exalting its charms. You will find the germs of that literature in certain of the writings of Samuel L. Clemens, and particularly in that scene of "Huckleberry Finn" wherein Huck wrestles with his conscience. Now comes its full flower in "LORD ALISTAIR'S REBELLION," by Allen Upward (*Kennerley*, \$1.50). Lord Alistair Stuart sickens of morality. Righteousness gets on his nerves. He sees its inherent insincerity, its eternal folly. Duty and destiny, right and wrong, sacrament and sacrilege, moral and immoral become, in his sight, mere shadows of shadows. As Lord Alistair, a younger son and in consequence a person of no importance, he can afford to rail at the sacred images, but when fate makes him Duke of Trent he can only flee England, "with her shopkeeper's conscience, where art is a sin and generosity a crime." "When we find a

nation of swindlers," he says sadly, "bent upon putting down polygamy in Utah, and a nation of pirates objecting to child marriage in Hindustan, we are clearly face to face with some form of insanity. And it is becoming more difficult every day to escape out of the power of the maniacs." But, having plenty of money, he actually makes that escape. His refuge is a tiny island in one of the more remote Swiss lakes, and there he founds a hospital for those who have sprained their souls trying to live according to the preposterous and impossible rules that moralists, law-makers, prophets, theologians and other such donkeys lay down. A clever book by a clever fellow.

"THE SCIENCE OF POETRY," by Hudson Maxim, is a formidable quarto volume, weighing perhaps two pounds, in which the inventor of maximite, stabilite, motorite and other lethal powders discourses earnestly and at great length upon the manufacture of epics and elegies. The investigations of Mr. Maxim, it appears, have led him to the theory that the practice of that craft is a far less arduous and recondite matter than the hot panting of poets has hitherto caused us to regard it. Any intelligent man, by observing the author's rules of potency, tem-potency, tropetry, trotem-potency and applied tro-potency, should be able to turn out a pretty fair grade of strophes. Mr. Maxim seeks to prove it by printing some of his own confections, fashioned in accordance with his *formulae*. They are, it must be confessed, fearful and wonderful things—especially his revised versions of Hamlet's soliloquy and of parts of "Paradise Lost"—and so, at first glance, they may seem to reduce his system of poetizing to an absurdity, but one suddenly reflects that their atrociousness may be due, after all, to some other element, external to the system itself—to a stupid stenographer, for example, or a heavy dinner.

In analysis Mr. Maxim is rather more happy than in synthesis. His central critical theory is summed up in this definition: "Poetry is the expres-

sion of insensuous thought in sensuous terms by artistic trope." By this he means that "abstract and intangible things lying outside experience are embodied by the imagination in the forms of concrete, tangible things lying within experience and endowed with their properties and attributes." The poet, in other words, deals in metaphors and images, in materializations and transmogrifications. It is his business to seek out the arresting figure, the vivid epithet, the memorable phrase. He condenses the vague steam of meditation and imagination into clear running drops. He brings the glory of the heavens, the vastness of love, the meaning of life within the limits of our narrow comprehension. He is, in a word, a master interpreter. A sound enough theory, of course, but not a noticeably new one. As Mr. Maxim says himself, Shakespeare was aware of it and actually set it down. The addition of trotem-potency, tropetry and other such hideous inventions gives it no new force. All that is worth reading in Mr. Maxim's huge book might have been printed upon six or eight of its pages (*Funk-Wagnalls*, \$3.50).

THE name of "My MARK TWAIN," by William Dean Howells (*Harper's*, \$1.40), is well chosen, for the book is less a record of events than an attempt at a personal interpretation. The Mark Twain that we see in it is a Mark Twain whose gaunt Himalayan outlines are discerned but hazily through a pink fog of Howells. There is an evident effort to palliate, to tone down, to apologize. The poor fellow, of course, was charming, and there was a lot of merit in some of the things he wrote—but what a weakness he had for thinking aloud! What oaths in his speech! What awful cigars he smoked! How barbarous his contempt for the strict sonata form! It seems incredible, indeed, that two men so unlike as Clemens and Howells should have found common material for a friendship lasting forty-four years. The one derived from Rabelais, Chaucer, the Elizabethans and Benvenuto Cellini—buccaneers of

the literary high seas, loud laughers, law breakers, giants of an elder day; the other came down from Jane Austen, Washington Irving and Hannah More. The one wrote English as Michelangelo hacked marble, broadly, brutally, magnificently; the other was a maker of pretty waxen groups. The one was utterly unconscious of the means whereby he achieved his staggering effects; the other was the most tiresome, fastidious and self-conscious of craftsmen. Read the book. It will amuse you; better still, it will instruct you. If you get nothing else out of it, you will at least get some notion of the abyssmal difference between the straightforward, clangorous English of Clemens and the simpering, coquettish, overcorseted English of the later Howells.

HERE are two books which lay bare some of the darkest secrets of the world. The first is "THE LURE OF THE ANTIQUE," by Walter A. Dyer (*Century Co.*, \$2.40), and the other is "MAGICIANS' TRICKS AND HOW THEY ARE DONE," by Henry Hatton and Adrian Plate (*Century Co.*, \$1.60). Mr. Dyer is full of distressing news about the discoveries of bogus antique manufacturers—distressing because most of us, on examining our treasures with his book in hand, will have to admit that we have more than once played the victim. He explains how new oak is turned into old oak with permanganate of potash and ammonia; how buyers of pewter mistake design marks for date marks; how rickety furniture worth less than nothing is converted into ancient furniture worth its weight in mushrooms. But the book is more than a mere broadside against chicanery. It is a little encyclopedia of information about those antiques which are really antique—old clocks, old plate and old lusterware, Heppelwaite sideboards and Sheraton writing desks, Wedgwood basalt and blue Staffordshire, Adam four-posters and Chippendale looking glasses—and there are scores of excellent illustrations, chiefly from photographs. The book of magicians' tricks is of like comprehensiveness and authority. It

shows exactly how the miracle of making the queen of hearts jump from a deck is performed, exactly how the professor gets a rabbit out of your plug hat, exactly how the Egyptian princess worms her way into the corded steamer trunk.

The minor novels continue to pile up. There is no getting to the bottom of the pyramid. I can only attempt a summary roll call, beginning with "YOUNG WALLINGFORD," by George Randolph Chester (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), a collection of episodes from the early career of Mr. Chester's celebrated hero, J. Rufus Wallingford, showing that gentleman's beginnings as a Napoleon of the bucket shops; and going on to "THE GREAT GOD GOLD," by William Le Quex (*Badger*, \$1.50), in which we learn how the hiding place of the lost treasures of Israel was discovered and why the discoverer couldn't cart them away; "FIRST LOVE," by Marie Van Vorst (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), the story of a youngster's calf love for a middle-aged woman and of her gentle quenching of his flame, whereby happiness comes to all concerned; "A CAVALIER OF VIRGINIA," by G. E. Theodore Roberts (*Page*, \$1.50), a stirring tale of Colonial days; "THE MASTER ROAD," by Carlin Eastwood (*Harriman*, \$1.35), a story of love making in a social settlement; "FLIGHTY ARETHUSA," by David Skaats Foster (*Lippincott*, \$1.50), one of the newfangled airship romances, with a heroine who is a good cook and as pretty as a picture; "THE CARAVANERS," by the author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden" (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), in which we are called upon to laugh, and not too genially, at the German view of the world and of the men and women in it; "NO MAN'S LAND," by Louis Joseph Vance (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.50), the silly story of a hero who is falsely accused of crime and treacherously robbed of his lady love; "THE SPENDTHRIFT," by Edward Marshall (*Dillingham*, \$1.50), a hack novelization of Porter Emerson Browne's play of the same name; and "JOHN MARSH'S MILLIONS," by Arthur Hornblow (*Dillingham*, \$1.50), an equally uninspired

version of Charles Klein's "The Next of Kin."

PLENTY of books for the kids! Here are half a dozen good ones. The first is another Uncle Remus book—and no doubt the last that we shall ever see. It is called "UNCLE REMUS AND THE LITTLE BOY" (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.00), and contains thirteen ballads and tales. The volume is printed in large, bold type upon thick paper and has plenty of good pictures and a cover in full color. Next come two books of adventure for boys of from twelve to sixteen—"THE HORSEMAN OF THE PLAINS," by Joseph A. Altsheler (*Macmillan*, \$1.50), and "TWO BOYS IN THE TROPICS," by Elisa Haldeman Figyelmessy (*Macmillan*, \$1.35). Mr. Altsheler's story has a boy scout for its hero and deals with hunting, exploring and Indian fighting on the frontier in the tumultuous days following the Civil War; Mrs. Figyelmessy's has the Spanish Main for its scene and concerns itself with natural history rather than with blood letting. Both books are well written and should interest every boy with the spirit of adventure in him. Then there is "A DIXIE ROSE," a story for girls by Augusta Kortrecht (*Lippincott*, \$1.50). I hesitate to express an opinion about a story for girls, but this one seems very charming, and at any rate, I can make oath that the design of its cover is of quite remarkable beauty. Finally, there are two excellent reprints of juvenile favorites, "MOPSA THE FAIRY," by Jean Ingelow, and "BIMI: STORIES FOR CHILDREN," by Louisa de la Ramé (Ouida) (*Lippincott*, \$1.50), each with pictures in full color.

THE COUNTRY BOY—

by Homer Davenport.
(*Dillingham*, \$1.25)

A celebrated cartoonist's chronicles of his boyhood in a little town, with drawings by the author.

SONGS OF LIFE—

by George Reginald Margetson.
(*Sherman-French*, \$1.00)
Very tedious doggerel.

CUPID'S CYCLOPEDIA—

by John Cecil Clay and Oliver Herford.

(*Scribner's*, \$1.00)

"Adamant, n. A very hard word. See *father*." Thus Mr. Herford maketh his jokes, some of them very good ones and the rest good enough. Mr. Clay's drawings are full of spirit.

A BOOK OF HOSPITALITIES AND A RECORD OF GUESTS—

by Arthur Guiterman.

(*Paul Elder & Co.*, \$1.50)

A charming gift book for friends with country houses. Designed with artistic skill, and contains blank pages for a record of the guests entertained by "the courteous host and hostess."

WORLD CORPORATION—

by King C. Gillette.

(*New England News Co.*, \$1.50)

A plea for the organization of a gigantic holding company, to take over all the corporations in the world.

THE WATER GOATS—

by Ellis Parker Butler.

(*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.00)

Three more of Mr. Butler's diverting farces, in a neat little volume.

THE WHISTLER Book—

by Sadakichi Hartmann.

(*Page*, \$2.50)

No other discourse upon Whistler that I have seen gives a more life-like picture of the man or a clearer account of his artistic ideals and accomplishments. Three score full page reproductions of his paintings and etchings add to its value.

HELL FIRE HARRISON—

by W. D. Wattles.

(*Page*, \$1.00)

Sword play, love making, the open road; colored pictures, decorated borders; a Christmas book.

PANSIES, VIOLAS AND VIOLETS—

by William Cuthbertson.

(*Stokes*, \$1.00)

An exhaustive treatise, with eight plates in color.

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By MARION C. TAYLOR

THE writer will be glad to offer suggestions or answer questions regarding shopping and the New York shops. Readers of the *SMART SET* inquiring for names of shops where articles described are purchasable should enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for reply, and state page and month.

WELL, the Horse Show is over and the opening night of the Opera is a month or so past, so we may assume that the social season is well under way. Every day the Avenue is congested with carriages and motors from early morning till still earlier the next day, and now that Thanksgiving is over almost everyone in town is busy with holiday shopping. It is well nigh impossible to get a table in any of the fashionable restaurants, and the theaters are crowded at night. Everyone is wearing his best bib and tucker, the vexations of fittings at tailor and dressmaker being past, and the fashionable world is quite ready for the usual strenuous season.

At the many smart November weddings the fashion of gowning the bride in artistic period costumes seemed predominant—most of the young women selected the styles best suited to their individual requirements, and the results were generally happy; simplicity in outline, graceful drapery and richness of material seemed the dominant notes. The veils were nearly all worn in the new caplike effect, which in the case of a lace veil—and they are undoubtedly the modish thing to wear—makes a charming frame for the face. The bridesmaids at most of the fashionable London weddings have been wearing little caps of various nets with short veils in back, but we seem to prefer hats, or hair ornaments in the case of any

evening wedding, which is an infrequent occurrence. Many of the bridesmaids this fall have worn charming Watteau costumes or Romney effects, the most beautiful part of them being the marvelous color combinations, which grow more beautiful each year. Some of the wedding processions are veritable pageants of gorgeous color effects.

At the Horse Show I was struck by the really wonderful furs and fur wraps worn, and the quiet, soft tones of many of the costumes worn in the evening, in contrast to the gorgeous Oriental effects seen at the Opera. I heard these colors referred to the other day as "joyous colors," and I know of no more suitable term. Deep, rich crimsons, glowing, flamelike tones, warm, deep yellows, and a beautiful orange are all marvelously treated so that the result is rich and harmonious, never glaring or bold as one might imagine. The colder colors, cerise and the like, seem less popular than those of brilliant depth.

A ribbon is frequently wound in the hair or a wide band of bugle trimming or something similar is frequently worn.

Parisian Hints

One of the newest French ideas is that of colored heels to one's shoes and slippers. The very smartest women are

wearing red and green heels to black shoes. These shoes frequently show cloth uppers of white or in a cloth to match the costume. I haven't the slightest idea whether the style will catch on over here or not. I can imagine some charming adaptations of it, but I also fear some dreadful results if it does. Many ultra fashionable women who affect First Empire, Empress Josephine costumes wear with them the heelless slippers of that period, and if one has a small slender foot the idea is charming.

Picturesque evening gowning is to my mind decidedly an artistic achievement, and one sees more and more of it each season. Gloves are almost always discarded with these period costumes as the idea is wholly incongruous. One's hair is frequently dressed in a modified style of the period, and one's jewels should be in keeping.

Speaking of hair, French women are wearing the hair rather close to the head to display rather than hide its charming contour. I hear that the bang is coming back—a regular child's bang, too, youthful no doubt but not universally becoming. Everything tends toward a low forehead, and little if any part of the ears is to be seen; however, the soft waves of hair loosely arranged are as becoming as any mode I know of.

Furs and Fur Bags

One of the winter's most charming ideas is the bag or purse of fur to match one's cloak or set or the trimming on one's suit or frock. They are seen mostly in the flatter furs, seal, mole, broadtail and the like, and are rather large—long and graceful with rounded corners. The mountings are very handsome gold ones, usually engraved and frequently gem-studded. I have also seen a few in the longer-haired furs, chinchilla, mink and sable; and except that they are a little bulkier, the idea lends itself splendidly to even skunk, American opossum and badger, all of which are very popular. The extensive use of ermine abroad has been

felt over here, as has the pretty fashion of having the skins of short-haired furs such as seal and mole made up in opposite directions, which is a conservatively decorative idea suggesting a host of charming conceptions.

Ermine and "*taupe*," as the French call mole, are still as successful from a fashion standpoint as they promised to be early in the season. In the cheaper furs red fox did not make the hit its sponsors hoped, nor has fitch in my opinion been much of a success. Badger, American opossum, cross fox and dyed raccoon, which closely resembles the more expensive skunk, seem to be the most popular of the cheaper furs. Natural raccoon is becoming quite common; Australian opossum is dying out; and I see less white fox this year than ever before; but it is essentially a fur winter nevertheless, and I see more fur used in every possible way than ever before.

A New French Fur Fashion

This is a tiny capelike affair called "*camail*" which clings closely to the shoulders not unlike a coachman's cape. I described in my November number a Francis wrap of black satin and velvet which accompanied a very smart black satin gown. This wrap had one of these little capelike affairs and is still the only thing of the sort I have seen over here, but the photographs and sketches from abroad represent them as charming accessories which will possibly be welcomed next spring.

Shoe Fashions

While there are no radical changes in shoes and slippers, once in a while one comes across items of genuine interest. I must mention a bootmaker's shop I know of which is unique. It is a little shop as shops go—but little from choice, because the proprietor understands and appreciates the value of a small, quiet and exclusive place where there is never any bustle and each individual customer's wants are personally at-

tended to. Incidentally, the owner is a man who puts into his bootmaking the thought and care of a man who loves his work. I mentioned white suits last month as being the smartest thing abroad—corduroys, fancy velours, etc., usually fur-trimmed, the success of which I was doubtful of over here. Well, they are already a success—the ultra young crowd wore them at Belmont Park for the Aviation Meet, and the Horse Show brought out still more of them. For skating I know of nothing prettier. This bootmaker has high white buckskin boots to accompany them. These boots clean beautifully, of course, and really are the only suitable thing to wear with these suits besides being a most charming and youthful fashion for that purpose.

I saw here also some very beautiful bead-embroidered slippers, so beautiful that I commented on them and learned that the embroidered vamps were imported and the slippers made up to one's measure over here.

Speaking of vamps reminds me that I heard a most interesting rumor the other day. I was in one of the best known boot shops and noticed a pair of satin evening slippers with tremendously long vamps exactly like foreign shoes—French ones especially, and I was told that they were coming into vogue over here. Now, while there is undoubtedly something extremely aristocratic in the very long slender appearance these give to one's foot, there is also to me something equally ugly in a long pointed vamp. To be sure, anything is better in a slipper than too short a vamp with a huge bulging ankle, for that is the unfortunate consequence practically impossible to avoid; however, a moderately short vamp, cut low, gives the foot a much daintier and more feminine contour in my opinion than this long pointed effect; but who knows, if it becomes really fashionable I presume we shall have to learn to like it. It is a new thing for us to copy foreign shoe styles; we generally lead the world in that respect.

Steel buckles grow more popular than ever for formal afternoon and restaur-

rant wear. The price has so far prevented them from becoming common. They share the vogue of rhinestones and gilded steel ones for evening.

A charming suggestion and a pleasant relief was a pair of white satin slippers with gilded steel buckles intended to be worn with gold stockings. The prettiest thing I have seen for semi-formal wear—in fact, for anything except the Opera or dancing—is a satin slipper with a sole a little heavier than that on a dancing slipper, a modified French heel, high but not quite as narrow as some, being nevertheless graceful and pretty, and a soft bow similar to a pump bow but not quite so stiff. These slippers, in shades to match or contrast with one's gown, are the very best and smartest thing I know of for the purposes I have mentioned.

New Hosiery

Some of the smartest stockings I have seen are not absolutely new in idea—that is, they are simply clocked stockings—but the combinations of colors and the arrangement of the clocking is as new as can be.

I have spoken about the season's craze for brilliant colors, and it is here reflected in the stockings. For instance, a beautiful shade of apple green silk shows a wide close fitting clocking (three or four lines of embroidery) of white, while for house wear with an all-white costume or even a delicate pink one a pair of flesh color stockings have the same clocks of apple green. Black ones are beautiful with clocks of purple, bright blue and especially red, for red slippers are going to be as popular as ever during the holiday season.

The Art of Corset Making

Some months ago I casually mentioned a corset made by a woman who had studied every known science that would help her to make a truly successful corset. I had but little space to devote to it that month and could not really do the matter justice. I have since found the corset to be, besides

healthful and sensible, a perfect fitting garment, so well made to suit each individual customer's requirements that it is rapidly becoming immensely popular here in town among women who demand the last word in this most important art. Many of the leading dressmakers and tailors are recommending it because it is so cleverly boned that the ugly mark where the corset leaves off is avoided and the absolute smoothness so much sought after is the result.

The Vogue of Angora

Since the sweaters and scarfs in angora have become so smart and popular the idea is spreading to other things, and I'm glad, for nothing is warmer, softer and serves its purpose better than the lovely woolly stuff that we used to associate with babies' caps. I saw the best set for motoring, sleighing—or even aeroplaning if you wish—of white angora—the vogue of white is one of the season's most delightful vagaries. The cap had those flaps which button on top when not in use and over the ears in extreme weather. It was accompanied by a scarf to wrap round the neck and soft fuzzy gloves, all in white, of course. Can you imagine anything more attractive for either a man or a girl? Of course it was intended for the former, but I find many such ideas offer suggestions for the latter, too.

Men's Lounging Robes

The newest lounging robe is also in angora, and really this is one of the best examples of its delightful possibilities. It comes in two-toned effects—a brown one has cuffs, collar and cord of dull rose, and is just as light as can be, as warm as toast and so soft and pliable. I can't imagine a more suitable material for the purpose. Besides, one of the most exclusive men's shops in town sanctions it, so why not be smart as well as comfortable when the two can be combined?

To Teach Temperance

A truly humorous suggestion is offered by a tall glass which has three rings around it about a half-inch apart. The first one measures a moderate drink. Resting on the top one is a fat little pig. The card which accompanies it says:

Pig, Whiskey, Soda. 1st line (for spirit) Moderation. 2d line (for spirit) Generous allowance. If the second line be exceeded the suggestion is obvious.

These also come with tiny donkeys instead of pigs; both are bound to cause fun and are attractive additions to the cellarette.

New Toilet Accessories

One that is sanitary, compact and attractively gotten up is a new tooth-brush in a nickel case, which, when the top is off and the brush taken out, acts as a handle. I know of nothing better for traveling or any purpose where a protection for the brush is needed. It also comes in silver and is an acceptable addition to one's other toilet articles. The other is a tiny powder puff in a flat leather case which comes in various kinds and colors of leather. The tiny handle of the puff lifts up and discloses a space for powder, which sifts through to the puff and obviates the necessity of a separate receptacle for powder, besides being a great convenience, as it regulates the flow of the powder perfectly.

A Real Novelty

Here is something I quite fell in love with the other day—a tiny flat glass tube about two inches long, with a wire around the top, having a hook which fastened it to the buttonhole to hold water and keep one's boutonniere fresh. When the flower is in it this little hook cannot be seen, and the device enables one to go about all day with a perfectly fresh flower. The idea is originally Russian, has had quite a vogue in England and France, where the fashion of a flower in the buttonhole is even more

popular than in America, and is not an unknown one over here; but I know of no other shop in town where these little arrangements can be found, although I have no doubt they will be copied in silver and gold as the idea is a splendid one for cotillion favors and the like. It would be useful to both men and women, for so many of the latter invariably wear a single flower with a simple walking suit.

Keeping Abreast of the Times

I have heard of all sorts of wonderful conveniences offered by department stores, and of all sorts of wonderful things sold by them, but it did surprise me a little the other day when I was told I might buy a Curtiss type aeroplane just as easily and quickly as two spools of silk. Now I don't suppose for a moment that there is going to be any great rush in that department nor any bargain sales in aeroplanes just yet. It is a little early to expect that, but the fact is nevertheless a practical example of the up-to-next-week business methods in vogue today.

I saw in this shop a very attractive fern dish of cut glass and silver with an electrolier or candles in the center. You can readily see the possibilities of this innovation. The shop in question has already seen them and has patented the device, which was an idea of the buyer in that particular department—another encouraging illustration of the co-operation between employer and employee in progressive firms today.

The Beauty of Hammered Silver

One of the leading silversmiths is showing a collection of the most marvelous pieces of hammered silver, a collection unequalled in America in its size and the beauty of the work. Each article is carved out of a single piece of silver, which, when one sees the delicate beauty of the finished designs and the perfection of the work, seems almost impossible, and, when one actually sees the work done, seems even more marvelous. Of course the silver is natur-

ally expensive, but it is one of the few genuine products of the age which simply cannot be commercialized. Each piece is the work of an artist who put the very best that was in him in his work, and is an honest piece of the very finest known work in silver. For a wedding or Christmas gift I know of nothing which of necessity more clearly reflects the truly artistic taste of the giver, and nothing surer of proper appreciation, for the artistic beauty of the work compels admiration.

New Ideas for the Motorist

In a shop devoted to motor apparel and accessories I came across three things especially noteworthy. The first was a splendid icebox of galvanized iron, covered with patent leather. It has a top tray with one large and two small compartments for sandwiches and other food stuffs, and the bottom has a large center space for the ice and two small deep ones for bottles or anything else one desires. The second was a bag to fasten on the brass rod at the back of the front seat; it closes with patent clamps and may be opened without removing it from the rod, and discloses a complete set of toilet articles, also needles, thread and a thimble. They are so handy and convenient that the bag is sure to be liked. A second bag to hang on the rod has a center space for a luncheon box, and two outer ones for Thermos bottles. Both of these come in various kinds and colors of leather.

Beautiful Enamels

One of the most exclusive drygoods shops is showing the most wonderful line of enamel jewelry, watches, lockets and medallions accompanied by delicately beautiful chains and no end of other dainty conceits. I happened to be passing one day, and a tiny locket of cut steel, having a center medallion of white enamel, showing an old-fashioned basket of varicolored flowers, caught my eye. The back was of a delicate mauve enamel, which was again introduced in

the chain. I have seldom seen anything of more delicate beauty in inexpensive jewelry. As I stopped to notice it my glance fell upon a medallion of cut steel and a charming shade of blue enamel; from that it wandered to other things, one more beautiful than the next. I do not know of another department or even a shop in town where so many exquisite French novelties of the sort are to be had. Some of the necklaces, antique effects of semi-precious stones, hammered silver or gold and tiny cut steel effects, are really lovely; and the loveliest part is they are so reasonable. Some of them are as low as eight dollars, and many beautiful examples are only a little more expensive.

Christmas Flowers

It is a more popular custom each year to send flowers at the holiday season; everyone's house is literally abloom with them. It is a charming idea and a sensible one, too, for where in former years cut flowers were sent it is now the growing plants that are favored—tiny trees and bushes which last for quite a long time and are a constant happy reminder of the giver. One of the newest ideas of the season I saw in an exclusive florist's the other day was a basket of a green effect resembling intertwined stems and roots; growing out of this were beautiful ferns and hidden away underneath were two glass vases for water. One of these held a delightful bunch of yellow roses, the other one of lilies of the valley; these mingled among the ferns were quite the prettiest thing I have seen, and the idea was such a splendid one. You see, the flowers could easily be changed as they withered, and in fact the growing ferns were very beautiful without any flowers. Many of the prettiest bushes and plants have red berries and flowers, which are especially seasonable and always welcome at Christmas time.

The New Records

Some of the so-called popular records for the phonograph are very good this

month. They include the duet "Alma" from "Alma, Where Do You Live?" and some of the best music from "The Girl in the Train" and "Our Miss Gibbs." Pryor's band gives a very good rendering of the "Adagio Lamentosa" from Tschaikowsky's "Sonata." Then I liked the charming duet "Let Us Talk Politics" from "La Fille de Mme. Angot," which was so successfully revived last winter at the Manhattan Opera House. Gadski sings two splendid records, one from "Don Giovanni," the other from "The Magic Flute," and I also admired a Lemmone flute record called "Andalouse."

Chiffon Muffs

In a small delightfully scented shop I saw some great big fluffy muffs of chiffon and flowers; the latter frequently were veiled with chiffon and in the case of a large pink muff the flowers were delicate La France roses and the muff was scented with an attractive rose scent. These are very popular for bridesmaid use especially and are a truly lovely accessory. For such an occasion one could, of course, use the natural flowers, replacing them later with the artificial.

Fashionable Watches

One of the most artistic jewelers in town is showing a line of those adorable little watches that are so very smart this season. He has several designs that are so new and exclusive one readily recognizes them as his work. One of the prettiest is oblong with rounded corners. It is of a delicate blue enamel, with a spray of diamonds across it. The very small round face of the watch shows in the center of the reverse side. No one would ever guess that these were watches, for they are worn suspended from a tiny chain and are so flat one would even doubt that there was depth enough for a locket, much less a watch. Another very odd one was oval in shape. Most of them are of enamel, gem-studded, and the delicate little chains which accompany

them show introductions of enamel, and frequently pearls are used in the chains. The stem of the watch and the links of the chain are usually of platinum.

One of the simplest but very handsomest ones I saw was a very small, very flat one of platinum. At the very edge, set so they only showed from a side view, was a rim of diamonds. The chain was a very handsome one of diamonds and platinum. Another more elaborate but equally beautiful one showed the very finest kind of work in the wreathlike design of tiny diamonds in the center of the plain platinum back. Each one is more beautiful than the next, and all of them are so delightfully feminine and the enamel ones are so delicate in color.

An Odd Locket

Speaking of enamel reminds me of an ornament I saw in this same place which is quite practical besides being unique and very handsome.

It is seldom one can refer to beautiful jewelry as practical, but I think I may safely claim that it is true in this case. The ornament is, in reality, a locket, but one does not guess this at first, owing to its extreme thinness. It is of platinum, oval in shape, the front showing a delicate spray of diamonds over a latticelike design through which shows a delicate pink enamel blending softly and beautifully with the jewels. The odd part of the ornament is that this enamel may be slipped out and a blue, green or violet one put in its place, so that one can suit the color to one's costume. These other slides of enamel accompany it of course. The locket shows a place for two pictures, and a delicately beautiful diamond and platinum chain accompanies it.

Another novelty was a dog collar of pearls, diamonds and rock crystal. The front medallion showed a very handsome design of diamonds seemingly set in the rock crystal. It was of course very unusual, but really much prettier than it sounds. They are also showing here many unique designs in earrings. Most of them are long and barbaric in

effect, and they show the season's partiality for the combination of diamonds and colored stones, which are so much more popular this winter than last year's pearls and diamonds. I saw a beautiful pair with pendant sapphires, and another pair of diamond hoops—very large with a rim of sapphires showing at the bottom where they widened out.

This shop made the prize for the Statue of Liberty flight that was one of the sensations of the Aviation Meet. An odd and beautiful prize was wanted, and the result was a very thin watch, the back of which was of enamel showing a panorama of the city's sky line at one side, Liberty at the other and the winning Bleriot machine in platinum in the center about to circle the statue. The coloring of the enamel was exquisite and the whole idea such a relief from the ever present loving cups.

New Petticoats

The prettiest thing I have seen recently in this line is a charming chiffon cloth skirt in two colors, a pink under a white, for instance, with knee deep plaited flounces plainly hemmed. Can you imagine anything softer or more utterly feminine than these? The colors are beautiful, too, all the pale shades in combination, besides such striking combinations as black over brilliant green or crimson for more practical wear.

For the Nails

Comparatively few people are fortunate enough never to have had the cuticle of their nails cut. Most of us realize, I think, that this is necessary to a perfect nail, but unfortunately the practice of cutting the cuticle if once begun is practically impossible to stop, as a rough and hard skin results. Formerly time and patience alone would eventually produce the desired result, but it took a great deal of the former and still more of the latter. Now, however, there is a quick remedy that is almost magical; it produces the desired results so quickly. It is a liquid, and if

applied faithfully it will dry up the dead skin so completely that there is no further need for scissors. I know it is going to be a great success, for there has long been a demand for just such a thing.

By the way, the nails are being worn quite long and pointed this season and also very highly polished. A long nail if properly shaped tends to give the fingers and hands the desired tapering effect.

The Season's Shopping Bags

The popularity of enamel is beautifully illustrated in the fittings of some of the new bags. They are in the most fascinating shades of enamel and are quite the prettiest fittings I have come across. The bags themselves are preferably plain when they have such elaborate fittings but of soft and beautiful leather lined with a color to blend harmoniously with the enamel.

Another handsome bag is an imported novelty of the season—in fact, most of the handsomest bags come from Vienna. This one is of morocco, which I think the prettiest leather for general use (with the possible exception of lizard, which is much more expensive) and has silver corners. As the corners wear out more quickly than any other part of the bag, this is a sensible as well as a smart idea. There is a very large tortoise shell button at the top which opens the bag, and a very thin double strap handle. I consider this the very handsomest bag I have seen this year, for it is simple yet inexpressibly smart, and comes in a variety of desirable shades.

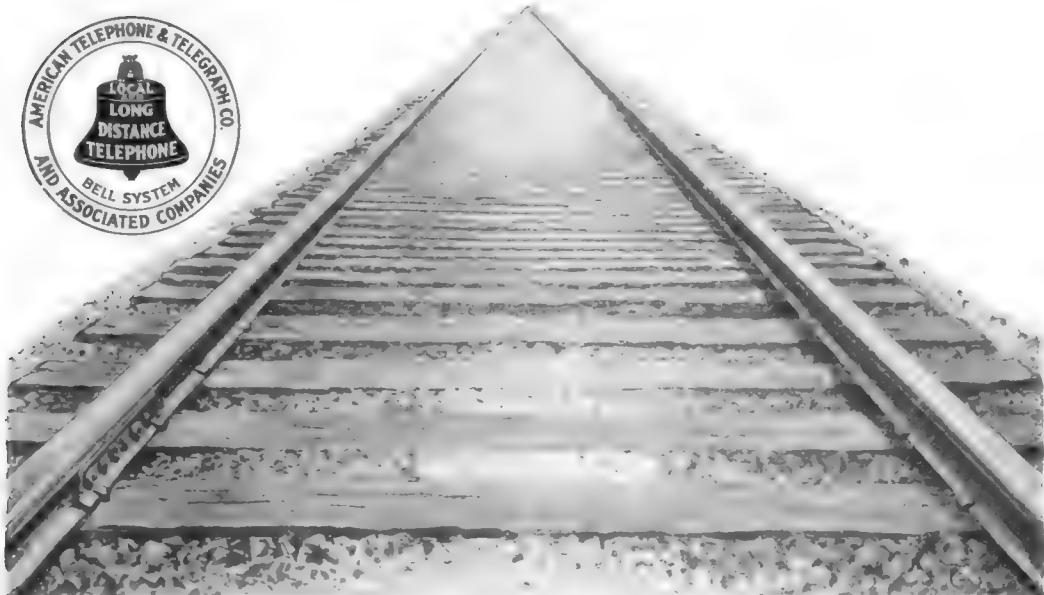
Boudoir Baskets

One of the Avenue shops noted for its exclusive things is showing some scrap baskets aptly called "boudoir baskets." They are of white enamel, a plain conservative shape with a wide gold-plated rim at the top. Midway between the top and bottom is an opening through which a ribbon may be

laced corresponding in color to one's decorations. I know of no handsomer or more appropriate basket for a woman's room than one of this sort, and if one wished to fill it with flowers for a holiday gift I'm sure its beauty would find a welcome for it. They show here a very fine line of those smart wicker baskets with a leather rim around the top and a brass monogram at one side which are ideal for living room or den. I also saw a bridge trump indicator which attracted me. A little metal stand held a miniature goal—posts and bar, across which dropped on either side tiny ivory flaps with the suits stamped on them in color. It is as attractive an indicator as I've seen and something different from the usual ones.

Chiffon Blouses

Some months ago I spoke of worsted embroidery as a season's novelty. One of the most successful uses to which it has been put is as a trimming to the ever-popular chiffon blouse. In both colors and white these blouses are almost a necessity in one's wardrobe and the method of trimming them with this bright-toned embroidery gives a smart touch that is one of the prettiest whims of the year. They are nearly all made with the seamless shoulder and collarless neck (a yoke of fine lace finishing them). Around this neck in a band which is frequently carried down the front of the blouse four or five inches, runs worsted embroidery in the very brightest Oriental colors, reds, yellows, greens, etc. This also forms a band around the bottom of the sleeves which usually reach a little below the elbow. I think it is much newer and prettier than the bead embroidery, which has been run to death. A blouse of this sort is frequently of the jumper type and may be worn over separate lace or lingerie waists, but I prefer one that is complete in itself for the former combination is not always a success as the underblouse is apt to be too elaborate.



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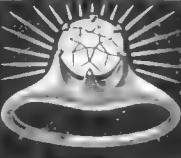
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Parowax used in this way saves a great deal of labor. It makes the usual hard rubbing unnecessary and prevents injury to the most delicate fabric. The reason is that it does away with the hard rubbing on the washboard.

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The SMART SET for FEBRUARY

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We like it pretty well ourselves, thank you—been feasting our esthetic souls on it for the past month, in fact. And now we lay it before you, kind, indulgent reader, with the hope that it will grace your Christmas table—coming, as it does, the one holiday magazine issued coincidentally with the holiday season.

This is the first Christmas cover the SMART SET has ever used. It is in line with the recent enlargement of the magazine, the inauguration of a serial story, a shopping department, and other progressive measures adopted during the past year.

The complete novel in the February issue will be the work of **Cyrus Townsend Brady**. This is Dr. Brady's latest book, and bears the title, "As the Sparks Fly Upward." It deals with a theme that has engrossed the minds of men ever since civilization forged the shackles of convention around matrimony—the attitude toward each other of a man and a woman marooned and alone on a desolate island. It is a tale of a modern Adam and Eve in a South Pacific paradise. Dr. Brady treats the subject with great delicacy and charm, and has written an absorbing story full of both tender sentiment and stirring action.

Viola Burhans, who is the author of "The Cave Woman," a novel that had a large sale, and "The Second Chance," recently published in the SMART SET, has written another splendid story, "**The Greater Motive**," which will appear in the February number. It is an unusual tale—that of a pugilist who fights with his eyes fixed on something far beyond the squared ring.

"**Who Pays?**" by T. D. Pendleton, is a strong, tense story by the author of "December Peachbloom," which was so well liked last year.

"**Arry**," by Paul Reese, is a sea story full of delightful humor. "**Disciples of Art**," by Adele Luehrmann, is a charming burlesque of the personally conducted tourist's attitude toward European art galleries.

Among other February features planned are "Society Inside and Out," an essay by Charles Hanson Towne; "The Lady of the Harem," by Jules Eckert Goodman; "As It Was in the Beginning," by G. Vere Tyler; "The Wife That Wasn't," by Louise E. Eberle, a really remarkable piece of fiction, and the continuation of E. Phillips Oppenheim's great novel, "Havoc."

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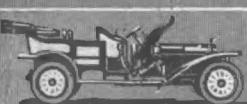


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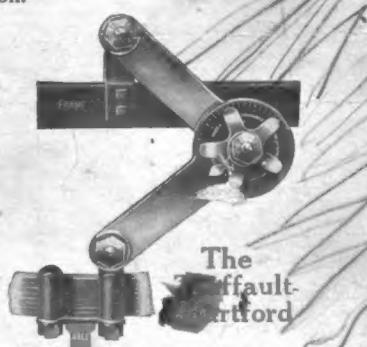


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